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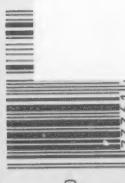
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• To assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest, responsible service . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent ♦

Excerpt from the Review's founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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# CHRONICLE

## South Africa's toughest censor

In April, Craig Matthew, a South African cameraman whose work appears on the ABC network, stood on a tree-lined avenue in Cape Town, South Africa, and filmed a small group of white women protesting the imminent execution of six black political prisoners. The women, members of a civil rights group, the Black Sash, stood outside the Houses of Parliament for at least ten minutes before the police arrived.

Through his viewfinder, Matthew noticed the police arresting an Associated Press photographer. Having on several occasions been arrested and assaulted while on the job, he decided to avoid trouble this time. He stopped filming and walked away, minutes before the police herded the women into their big yellow trucks.

Since November 1985, when the government imposed its first set of blanket restric-

tions on the media under the state of emergency, journalists like Matthew have struggled to tell the apartheid story, but the American public is hearing it less and less. According to a recent Canadian government study, coverage of South Africa on U.S. networks declined by two-thirds between December 1986, when more stringent regulations were imposed, and last fall — and it continues to wane. On CBS, the network that has covered South Africa most consistently, the number of stories fell from fifty-one in the first three months of last year to just seventeen during the first three months of 1988.

There is more than one reason for the decline. For one thing, the state of emergency, aimed at crushing opposition, has partially succeeded. In a sense, says Joseph Lelyveld — the foreign editor of *The New York Times*, who won a Pulitzer Prize for *Move Your Shadow*, his book on South Africa — less is being reported because less is happening.

For another, the police are targeting the media to a far greater extent than they used to, often arresting reporters before anyone else. A few weeks ago, for instance, some sixty women demonstrated outside the Chamber of Mines to protest proposed legislation against black trade unions. "There were four or five crews there," says an American network producer. "When the police moved in they went straight for the press to arrest them, without paying any attention to the women. The press has become the first casualty."

Finally, the genius of the press restrictions, many observers say, is that they push the press, including the U.S. press, to censor itself.

South Africa initially claimed that the restrictions were imposed because, among other things, cameras provoked "unrest." But the restrictions became more stringent even as disturbances declined. In November 1985 all camera crews and photographers were barred from areas where there was civil unrest. It also became illegal to publish the names of detainees without permission.

In June 1986 the ban on covering unrest was expanded to include print reporters. Re-

porting "subversive" comments became illegal. By December, the government had extended the ban to include reports on non-violent protests.

For all their scope, the regulations are disarmingly vague. "Subversive" statements are subversive if the government says they are; the definition has even been stretched to include blank spaces that indicate censorship in newspapers. The definition of "unrest" is similarly elastic — from children throwing stones to women silently holding a banner, as cameraman Matthew discovered. Every U.S. television network bureau in South Africa employs lawyers to check any questionable footage before it is sent out of the country. However, "network lawyers are probably the best paid lawyers on the planet, and they cannot tell you what the stuff means. They cannot tell you how you can avoid violating [the regulations]," Ken Walker, a former ABC correspondent, told a congressional subcommittee recently.

The penalties for breaking the regulations are severe: 20,000 rand (about \$10,000) or ten years in jail or both. The government, however, is reluctant to argue its case before the courts and usually resorts to swifter, more arbitrary administrative punishments. Local journalists can be detained indefinitely without being officially charged and their newspapers can be closed; since June 1986, foreign journalists can be expelled and their bureaus shut down. Thirteen foreign journalists have been expelled so far and another 186 have been denied visas.

This combination of vague regulations and severe penalties is a recipe for self-censorship, a problem U.S. journalists addressed before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa in March. Allister Sparks, South African correspondent for *The Washington Post*, testified that the threat of expulsion has an effect on story selection, "on what you cover and what you do not cover. I live and move among these [foreign journalists] and I know . . . they are constantly on the lookout for any [story] that can be . . . termed a positive story." Thus, Sparks said, when the authorities fire a warning shot "in the form of a sudden shortening of their visas" they can demonstrate "positive" coverage.

The more "negative" the story, the more serious the decision for journalists, says an American network producer in Johannesburg: "Before doing any story, we must assess whether it's worth getting hammered."

Richard Cohen, a former CBS foreign-news producer who has been highly critical of American television network practices in South Africa, argued in a *New York Times*



**Black and white:** Rozanne Botha, daughter of President P. W. Botha, and Zindzi Mandela, daughter of jailed black leader Nelson Mandela, appeared in a documentary that CBS delayed for six months.



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opinion-page piece last year that the networks might improve their coverage by leaving and covering the country from neighboring states, out of the reach of the censor.

But several foreign and local journalists believe the story is too complex and subtle to cover from afar or with free-lance "cowboys." Irwin Manoim, co-editor of the Johannesburg-based *Weekly Mail*, which has been threatened with suspension by the government, believes the telling of the South Africa story will suffer further if the foreign media go. "Censorship is untidy and internally contradictory and there are limits to be pushed," he says.

Cohen believes that the networks are not pushing them, however, because they are "scared stiff" of having their bureaus closed. A clear example, he says, is CBS's six-month delay in airing "Children of Apartheid," a hard-hitting and much-honored documentary produced by Brian Ellis and narrated by Walter Cronkite. The film features interviews with black children who have been in jail, and Ellis cuts between interviews with Rozanne Botha, the daughter of South Africa's State President P.W. Botha, and Zindzi Mandela, the daughter of jailed African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, to underscore the gulf between the children of those in

power and those in resistance.

Ellis went into the country without a work permit and Cronkite was allowed only a three-day tourist visa. South African camera crews were not acknowledged in the credits and CBS's Johannesburg bureau was not involved in the making of the documentary.

CBS executives privately concede they were worried about what might happen to their South African crews. CBS staff members in Johannesburg, while supporting the documentary, believe the network executives behaved "responsibly" in allowing a South African lawyer to check the tape. At the lawyer's suggestion, CBS excised a line that said the documentary contained some illegal material. It was a line which worried the South African crews, who felt it jeopardized their position. "You don't wave a flag to a bull just for the sake of promoting the film," says a crew member.

What happened later may be more chilling than any of South Africa's laws. Shortly after the documentary was screened in the U.S. last December, Godfrey Sicelo Dhlomo, a teenager who appeared in the tape, was arrested by the police and reportedly pressured to sign a statement saying the CBS interviewer had "coached" him. According to the police, he had agreed to denounce the

documentary at a press conference but had, instead, gone into hiding after his release.

A few days later his body was found, a bullet wound in his head.

CBS was the only U.S. network that covered the funeral, in Soweto. Its camera crew was barred from the church and from the cemetery by the police, who gave 200 tickets to the family to allocate to funeral-goers. CBS correspondent Martha Teichner got a ticket and went. "We shot the police giving out tickets to the family and we shot the cortège leaving the church," a crew member says. "Then our correspondent did a stand-up piece and explained how we couldn't show what Dhlomo's friends had said about him, or how they had filled his grave, or how the police had teargassed people outside the Dhlomo family house. We thought it was an effective piece."

So, in the strange world of South Africa today, an effective piece of television has become one that tells us what it cannot show.

Pippa Green

Pippa Green, who graduated from Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism in May, is South African. She has written for The Weekly Mail in Johannesburg and The Argus in Cape Town.

## The silver Volvo newspaper heist

Many readers, at one time or another, have wanted to trash the local newspaper. In April, a man in Raleigh, North Carolina, literally did.

A dedicated volunteer in North Carolina state senator Harold Hardison's campaign for lieutenant governor, James F. Jones was fed

up with *The Independent*. In its April 21 issue, in which it endorsed candidates running in the May 3 state primary elections, the Durham-based biweekly alternative newspaper hammered readers with a front-page attack on the nine-term conservative Democrat. STOP HIM, it said, describing a vote against Hardison as "the most important vote you will cast." Among other strongly worded characterizations, the liberal paper called Hardison, who is an influential string-puller at the state capitol, "the enemy of women's equality, worker safety, environmental protection, civil justice reform, consumer rights, and corporate accountability."

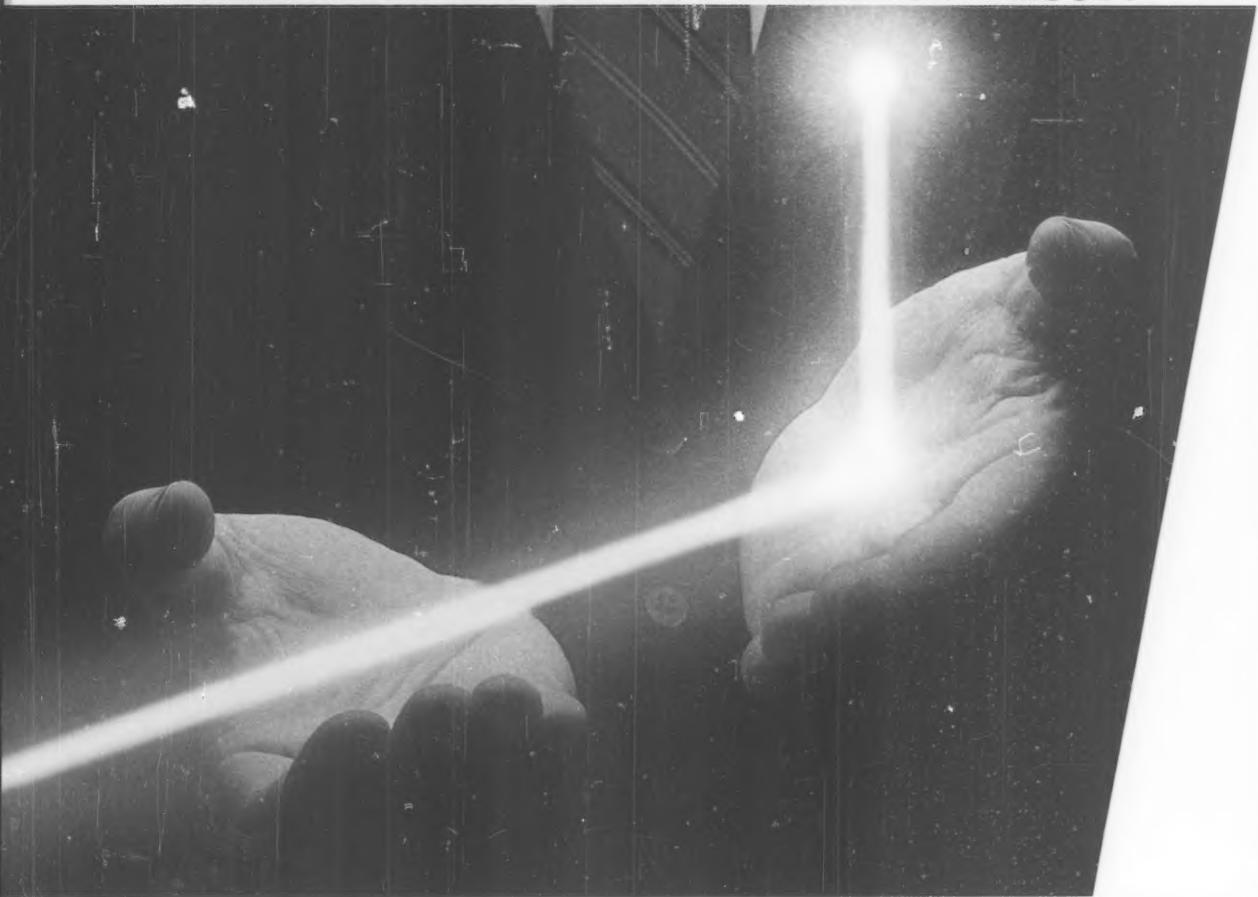
Jones, a twenty-four-year-old political science major at North Carolina State University, was already peeved at the way his candidate — the accepted front-runner in a boring three-way Democratic primary — had been treated by the press. His anger boiled over on the Thursday *The Independent* distributed its 46,000 free copies of the endorsement issue, including 21,000 in Raleigh. "They had crossed the line between expressing their opinion and being downright unfair," he says. "When newspapers abuse

the public trust like that, and give the public distorted views, people can make the wrong decision." So, deftly bypassing the normal miffed-reader routine of writing a letter to the editor or hollering at a reporter, Jones drove a friend's silver Volvo through town Friday morning, grabbed entire stacks of fresh papers off some thirty *Independent* racks, and dumped them in trash bins around the city. By that afternoon, with roughly 7,000 copies resting peacefully in fly-infested Dumpsters, not a single *Independent* could be found in downtown Raleigh. But thanks to a witness who had memorized the Volvo's license plate, *The Independent* easily tracked Jones down.

As if timed perfectly, the filching happened the day before the paper celebrated its fifth anniversary. Neatly dubbed "The Great Hardison Newspaper Heist" by the campaign staff of Hardison's leading opponent, state senator Anthony Rand (whom *The Independent* endorsed), it did it in a few days what the stalwart paper's solid reporting and aggressive editorials (see "Has the Alternative Press Gone Yuppie?" CJR, November/December 1987) had never completely done: put



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## CHRONICLE

*The Independent* on the map. Shortly after the pilfered papers became statewide news, Hardison told reporters, "I didn't even know there was such a paper as an *Independent*." He was talking in the past tense. Executives of the newspaper quickly capitalized on the attention, asking for \$5,000 restitution from Jones and the Hardison campaign to pay for replacement copies. Those hit the streets Tuesday, still well before the election, bearing a new front-page admonition: STEAL THIS ISSUE . . . BEFORE SOMEBODY ELSE DOES.

As the furor continued, "it diverted the attention of the Hardison campaign to what was, in the whole scheme of things, a non-issue," says Ken Eudy, executive director of the North Carolina Democratic Party. Already trying to defend its derogatory anti-Rand advertisements, the campaign began a concerted effort to distance itself from the *Independent* flap. Hardison and his campaign staff fervently denied any knowledge of or responsibility for Jones's activities, saying they couldn't regulate the hundreds of volunteers working for the campaign, and refused to pay *The Independent* off. Campaign aides liken the restitution request to extortion, although they say privately they would have paid if the paper had not milked the event so publicly.

*The Independent* is now suing Hardison's campaign committee and Jones to recover its \$5,000 printing costs. "We really need the money," says Steve Schewel, the paper's president. "It's damage to us, it's damage to our advertisers, and it's damage to the First Amendment." But he is happy nonetheless and admits to gloating a little: "The whole thing's been great for our visibility and our significance." In its next issue, *The Independent* asked readers to help defray its legal and printing costs. For a donation of \$25 or more, supporters get a T-shirt picturing the purloined papers, the Bill of Rights, and Senator Harold Hardison — all jammed together in a trash bin.

Oh yes, Hardison, who originally appeared to be the clear front-runner, lost to Rand by a startling margin of 17 percent. He did not ask for a runoff. As for Jones, who was officially dismissed from the campaign, he says he regrets taking the newspapers and accepts part of the blame for Hardison's loss. "Within the past two months," he muses, "I sure have learned much more about politics than I would have ever gotten out of a college textbook."

Michael Milstein

*Michael Milstein, formerly a reporter for The News and Observer, in Raleigh, North Carolina, now works for the Los Angeles Times.*



Michael Milstein

**Fear factor:** A libel suit against *Toronto Life* magazine by the wealthy Reichmann family (brother Paul with his late father, Samuel, left; brother Albert, above) all but killed a journalism contest.

## Libel: Canada's cold wave

The hot topic for members of the Canadian press this year has been a controversial magazine article and the string of libel suits it has spawned, and whether this blast of litigation is having a chilling effect.

It all started last November, with the publication in *Toronto Life* magazine of a 40,000-word article on "The Mysterious Reichmanns," a wealthy Toronto family, and their lives in Europe and North Africa during the Holocaust.

The Reichmanns are billionaire mega-developers with interests all over the world: in New York, for instance, they are Manhattan's biggest commercial landlord. They are also Orthodox Jews whose personal lifestyle is modest and low-key.

Author Elaine Dewar approached the family's past as a kind of puzzle. She spent more than a year traveling to Hungary, Austria, France, Israel, Morocco, and the U.S. to try to piece together the story of their lives before, during, and just after World War II. Written in the first person, the article raises more questions than it answers, and it ends with the author speculating on how the father, now deceased, made money during the war — questionable currency dealings, she suggests — and how the profits may have financed the family's undisputed efforts to rescue Jews from the Nazis and aid concentration camp prisoners.

Within days after the article appeared, the Reichmanns sued Dewar and the magazine for \$82 million. The family contends that the article is false — based on rumor, hearsay, and half-truths about their religious affiliations, their parents' lives during the war, and the sources of their father's income. They charge that its conclusions about the father's

business practices and their own may, among other things, damage their reputations severely.

That was the first suit. When a columnist for the *Toronto Sunday Sun* wrote a favorable review of the original story, repeating some of its allegations, the family sued the columnist and the paper. And when *The Globe and Mail* reported on the suit and the controversy, it was sued, too. The Reichmanns argued that the *Globe* article implied wrongly that they had filed the original lawsuit in order to keep people out of their past, not because they believed the article was false.

*Toronto Life*, meantime, entered the piece in contests, including the National Business Writing Awards, a prestigious competition jointly sponsored by The Royal Bank of Canada, the country's largest financial institution, and the Toronto Press Club.

Given the Reichmanns' penchant for litigation related to the article, the contest's chief judge asked the Royal Bank for a legal opinion on whether the twenty-six members of the judging panel could be sued as well if the entry was accepted; his concern stemmed from the fact that, under Canadian law, republishing a libelous statement is the same as running it in the first place, and that judging the article might be interpreted as republishing it. The bank's law firm advised the sponsors to drop the article.

Without consulting the other judges, chief judge Kenneth Barnes decided to scratch the article from the contest, and an uproar ensued. *Toronto Life* editor Marq de Villiers withdrew from the competition all the other articles he had submitted, and most of the editors of Canada's largest newspapers and magazines followed suit, including *The To-*

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ronto Star; *The Globe and Mail*; Canadian Press, the national news service; and the monthly magazine *Saturday Night*. Of 256 entries, 134 were withdrawn. Two panel judges also resigned in protest.

Geoffrey Stevens, managing editor of *The Globe and Mail*, believes that the legal argument against accepting the article is spurious: "The writer and the magazine, and not the judges of any journalistic awards which accept entries in good faith, will be held responsible" if the libel suit is successful. Spokesmen for the Royal Bank and the Toronto Press Club said that caution was warranted because the accuracy of the article had been challenged.

Journalists say the contest controversy is

a classic case of libel chill — of cold feet resulting from the fear of being sued. The fear comes from the fact that in Canada, unlike in the United States, the burden of proof in a libel suit is on the press: it is up to the defendant to prove that what was said was true and fair. Few cases actually go to trial, and damage settlements tend to be small. But the newspaper or magazine bears the brunt of the cost in most libel actions, and that can make an editor or publisher think twice about printing anything that could result in a suit and be expensive to prove. In an article in *The Globe and Mail*, a writer calls a libel suit "a bargain basement method of silencing . . . critics."

In the same article, the writer refers to the

Reichmann controversy this way: "Recently, an awards competition for business journalism effectively died as a direct result of libel chill, and it would be highly risky to supply further details of the case — a classic illustration of the phenomenon at work."

Meanwhile, libel chill did not prevent the Canadian National Magazine Awards from giving the *Toronto Life* article two top prizes; it also won a top prize in a city and regional magazine contest sponsored by the University of Kansas journalism school. And Dewar is converting her article into a book.

*Martin Krossel*

*Martin Krossel is a free-lance writer living in Toronto.*

Jane Rosett



## The AIDS editor

Max Navarre designs, lays out, and edits a nationally distributed newsletter from his Manhattan apartment, and, on occasion, from a bed at Roosevelt Hospital. Navarre, like most of his more than 12,000 readers, has AIDS.

Once a month he turns out the *PWA Coalition Newsline*, written for and mostly by people with AIDS. Its forty-eight pages include information on the latest medical developments, memorials to departed friends and lovers, and letters and notes from places as widely scattered as Johannesburg and a federal prison in Atlanta. "My main concern is publishing material written by people who are ill," says Navarre.

A tall, soft-spoken thirty-four-year-old, Navarre was a playwright and cabaret performer before he was diagnosed as having AIDS in 1985. Now he devotes nearly all his time to putting out the *Newsline*. He had no background in journalism when he took over the two-year-old newsletter a year ago from

its founder, Michael Callen, a singer and songwriter who is still a regular contributor. But Navarre had begun writing about the AIDS crisis when he first became ill, for arts magazines like *High Performance* and *October*. "I have always written, and when I got sick I didn't know what else to do," he says. "I was really frightened and I thought it would help me, and it has."

The *Newsline* is supported by PWA Coalition — PWA stands for People With AIDS — a grass-roots group of individuals with AIDS and AIDS-related complex, which is in turn funded primarily by private contributions and grants from foundations. It is mailed free to people with the disease and is available at the offices of gay organizations and many physicians who treat AIDS patients.

*PWA Coalition Newsline* is often heartbreaking and occasionally inspiring. Sometimes it presents controversy, such as scientific sparring over the side effects of AZT, the only federally approved medication

for the AIDS virus. Sometimes it is even funny. The March 1988 issue featured a mock menu for an AIDS brunch — chicken soup with aloe (a natural food ingredient said to boost the immune system), and jalapeño-and-AZT tarts. February's issue contained a drawing celebrating "five hundred T4 cells" — a humorous reference to a healthy white-blood-cell count that might be obscure to the general public.

Since it is based in New York, most of its listings — for AIDS support groups, bereavement counseling, special AIDS prayer sessions, and so forth — are for people who live in or near the city. But the letters come from all over. "So that is me for now . . . surviving with more 'positives' than 'negatives,'" concludes a letter from a man with AIDS in Boca Raton. "We the inmates at 'Death Row' would like to wish you a happy and wonderful year," starts a letter from the AIDS facility of a New York City jail. An Albuquerque man recently wrote to say how important the *Newsline* is "as a vehicle for assisting me in feeling connected to others living with AIDS." After a disclaimer from the editor, noting that the PWA coalition does not endorse any particular treatment or study, the news section of the *Newsline* gives reports from all points on the medical frontier, with headlines like AIDS CASES AMONG DRUG USERS HIGHER THAN EXPECTED and BALANCING THE VITAL FORCES OF THE BODY. Some of these items are strictly for the medically sophisticated: "Acting as a biological response modifier, Ampligen increases intracellular antiviral activity by stimulating interferon production . . . , one story begins.

Feature articles in recent issues have included an account of a man telling his family that he has AIDS, a long discussion — by former editor Callen — about possible alter-

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native causes of AIDS besides the HIV virus, and a list of pointers for people who need blood transfusions (larger needles mean a faster transfusion; saline solution is unnecessary in some cases). Randy Shilts's book, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*, got a tough review in February. Sal Licata suggested a new, less sweeping subtitle: *One Gay Man's Look at How AIDS Impacted San Francisco*.

Navarre is scathing about the treatment of the AIDS crisis in the mainstream press, accusing the media of ignoring people who manage to live with their disease in a positive way. "The press," he says, is "too bored to investigate the possibility that not everyone with AIDS is a tragic figure . . . If people with AIDS read the papers they are going to assume they really are dead meat." He sees the *Newsline* as a sort of antidote.

Although his illness has diminished his stamina, Navarre plows through some 800 or 900 pieces of mail each month. Still, he doesn't consider himself any sort of hero for sometimes producing the newsletter from his hospital room. "On those occasions I've gotten a lot of help," he says. "I do it because I love what I do. I think it's important that it gets out every month, and that I am able to do it."

He also writes editorials, including a recent one about the relentless banality of AIDS. "When Rudolph Valentino died," he wrote, "two Japanese girls joined hands and threw themselves into the mouth of Fujiyama. I go to my one-hundredth funeral and go out for breakfast. If it really gets too much, I go away for the weekend. Shouldn't I be waving my arms and screaming as I throw myself under the A train? . . . We carry on, we carry on . . ."

*Robert Mayerson*

Editors' note: *Max Navarre died on May 28.*

*Robert Mayerson, a former reporter for the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, is a free-lance writer in New York.*

boom that left town sometime around 1986. Since then a third of the office space has come up empty, making the Texas capital the nation's leader in office-vacancy rates. Foreclosures are at an all-time high and the city's per-capita debt is the state's most burdensome. Some of Austin's luminaries, like former Governor John Connally, have made news of bankruptcy filings read like the society page.

But not everything is different: the local daily, the *Austin American-Statesman*, is once again under fire (see "Austin's Statesman Gets Surrounded," CJR, September/October 1987). This time things hit the fan in April, when *Texas Monthly* reported that the Statesman's "veteran high-tech writer Kathleen Sullivan was a skeptic, not a booster," and that her colleagues think "that stance cost her job."

The piece said that Sullivan had riled influential members of the business community with her stories on worker safety in high-tech companies, which Austin sees as its economic salvation. And, in an odd twist to the tale, the *Monthly* said that when Sullivan was forced to resign, she was offered money in return for, among other things, a promise not to sue the paper or even criticize it.

The item stung the *Statesman's* hierarchy.

## Austin redux: the Kathleen Sullivan mystery

Things sure have changed around Austin. Gone from the skyline are the building cranes, once known as "the national birds of Texas." They vanished with the economic

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Shortly after it appeared, editor Arnold Rosenfeld and *Texas Monthly* publisher Michael Levy exchanged heated words about it during a chance encounter outside an exclusive dining and meeting place called, appropriately, The Headliners Club. Things were not much calmer back at the *Statesman*, where Rosenfeld and *Statesman* publisher Roger Kintzel called meetings with the staff to plead their case that Sullivan's departure was untainted by political considerations. Some reporters remain unconvinced, however.

One of management's problems is that it refuses to say precisely why Sullivan was fired. "That's part of discussing a personnel case that I just don't think would be very admirable to go into," says Rosenfeld. Another is what some reporters see as the appearance of a conflict of interest. According to Sullivan, her troubles began last August when she got "aggressive in the wrong places," reporting on health-and-safety problems at an Austin company that manufactures semiconductor chips. The stories, about an unreported fire and a chemical leak, angered Pike Powers, according to *Texas Monthly*, although he denies it. Powers is an influential lawyer and lobbyist, a power broker who chaired the chamber of commerce economic development committee. The vice-

Inset: Alan Pogue



**Why did she leave?** Kathleen Sullivan says she was forced off the *Statesman's* high-tech beat, and off the Sematech story, because she was "aggressive in the wrong places." The *Statesman* contends she wasn't aggressive enough.

chairman of that committee was *Statesman* publisher Kintzel.

As committee chair, Powers led Austin's drive to snare Sematech, a fledgling federally subsidized consortium of thirteen semiconductor companies that was searching for a home. Sematech, with some 800 projected jobs plus spinoff companies, was a big economic fish for whoever pulled it in. In late September, Sullivan reported that Sematech was being offered an \$8 million incentives

package to come to Austin, and Powers concedes he was riled about this one. "The competition shouldn't read the incentives you're offering," he says. Sullivan says Powers told her that he'd hold her "personally responsible" if Austin failed to snare Sematech.

Powers complained about Sullivan to Kintzel, who says he didn't like the job Sullivan was doing either. But Kintzel says he had a very different reason — she was not aggressive enough. "It was obvious to me that we

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## CHRONICLE

weren't getting the story," he says. Kintzel mentioned his concern to Rosenfeld, who "did his own investigation" and concluded that Sullivan should be taken off the Sematech story. Although some reporters and community members viewed his seat on Powers's committee as a possible conflict, Kintzel doesn't see it that way: "I think it's important for the newspaper to be connected to the community as best we can," he says. "I think it's part of my job. My integrity is intact."

In November, Sullivan was replaced on the Sematech story by Laylan Copelin, a politics writer with no high-tech background. Copelin says that he considered the race to land the company a basically political story, adding that he was encouraged to be aggressive and that he was lauded by his superiors when he reported that the incentives package was at least \$35 million and could go as high as \$65 million. (All told, it ended up at \$68 million.) The *Statesman*, in large measure, rests its case in the Sullivan affair on Copelin's clips. "What we did was exactly opposite of what Pike Powers wanted," says Kintzel. "We put Laylan Copelin on there to enhance coverage." Indeed, Copelin's work on Sematech was solid and well-researched, although it was focused almost entirely on the race to land the business and on the consortium's funding. More skeptical coverage has been left to others, such as the *The Wall Street Journal*, which on January 8 ran a critical story in which industry executives and analysts called Sematech, among other things, a "government bailout" that "already has lost its way."

In the days following her reassignment, Sullivan's weekly column was terminated and she was told to stop work on a piece she had been pursuing on the health and safety of maintenance workers in high-tech companies. She says that then-business editor Charles Kaufman told her she "needed to take a whole new approach to the high-tech beat and that that whole new approach did not include writing on worker health and safety." "Not true," says Kaufman. "If that's the message she was left with she was reading between the lines." But he also adds: "Maybe you ought to call half a dozen high-tech writers around the country and find out how they see their beat. I mean, I think all those [worker safety] stories are important. But is that their beat?"

On January 6 a banner headline in the *Statesman* announced AUSTIN WINS SEMATECH — JOBS, MONEY TO BRING IN ECONOMIC WINDFALL. Sullivan was put back on Sematech, but a month later, as she was about to finish up an investigative piece on the Dell

Computer Corporation, a highly successful Austin-based company, she was told that she could resign or be fired. Sullivan claims that the reason she was given was "unsatisfactory performance" related to her Sematech coverage, but she believes her upcoming piece on Dell, which she had initiated, was the final straw for management. In any event, the editor who gave her the word also broached the subject of her signing a "severance agreement" in return for money.

That seven-page legal document would have prevented Sullivan from, among other things, suing or criticizing the *Statesman* or its owner, the Cox chain, or seeking employment with Cox again. It also required that she hand over her notes and not write any stories in the future related to those notes, and that she keep the agreement confidential. In return, she would receive \$8,125. The offer was a first for the *Statesman* newsroom, although similar agreements had been used in other departments.

Kintzel says he was protecting himself from a potential sex-discrimination suit — "I viewed her as litigious," he says. But Sullivan ultimately rejected the deal, calling the offer "hush money." She resigned, leaving the Dell story in her computer and an uproar in the newsroom. A photocopy of two stories appeared on the bulletin board there — one was about horrifying working conditions in India, the other a Sullivan story on federal regulations covering hazardous chemicals in the American workplace. An accompanying note pointed out that the writer of the foreign story had been "nominated for awards" while the author of the local piece "got canned."

The aftermath? Kintzel says he's "not sure I'd be inclined to do [the legal document] again." And he no longer serves on the economic development committee at the chamber of commerce. Meanwhile, former business editor Kaufman has been moved to a job reporters refer to as "promotions director." He says, "I network with special sections."

As for Sullivan, three weeks after leaving the *Statesman* she was hired to cover the high-tech beat for the *San Francisco Examiner*. At press time, she said the *Examiner* was getting ready to print an investigative piece on Dell Computer, a new version of the one she had been working on when she was forced to resign. Kintzel says the *Statesman* is pursuing that story, too.

*Jim Shahin*

*Jim Shahin, a former reporter for the Statesman, is politics editor of the biweekly Austin Chronicle.*



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# COMMENT

## The time of the censors

More by chance than through planning, this issue of the *Review* and the May/June issue contain articles that, taken together, highlight common press problems in two democracies — Israel and Great Britain — and in a third country, South Africa, which prides itself on its tradition of parliamentary government. In Israel, the tightening net of restrictions on coverage of the Palestinian uprising seriously hampers and, to some degree, intimidates Israeli and foreign correspondents alike. In Britain, television coverage of the turmoil in Northern Ireland has been severely restricted. And in South Africa, two and a half years of stringent restrictions on coverage of political dissidence have pushed journalists to become their own censors.

Although the similarities should not be overstated, there is a pattern here, one that defies the cliché that totalitarian and third world nations are the sole antagonists of a free press. The three countries that are now exhibiting a growing harshness toward reporters and are inhibiting their freedom to report are not ignorant of the supposed blessings of a free press. On the contrary, they are familiar with those benefits and have found them not always to be worth the cost. Fearing the power of an unrestrained press, they have chosen to fetter it. South Africa in particular stands out as a master at restricting news coverage, for it has successfully averted the world's view from all but the official version of its internal unrest.

As Joel Greenberg's article on the difficulties of covering Israel's West Bank makes clear (see "Telling the West Bank Story," page 40), journalists are not easily daunted by restrictions imposed by the military: "The closing off of certain areas has been taken as a challenge by local and foreign reporters, who have made it their business to get into precisely the zones from which they have been barred by the army." We admire journalists of that stripe.

Meanwhile, there is little we can do to aid those reporters who, in the face of government censorship and a variety of forms of intimidation, are courageously seeking to tell the truth about what is taking place in Israel and South Africa and Northern Ireland. Where the intimidation takes the form of imprisonment and beatings, as in South Africa, we can support the work of organizations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, which has proved effective in bringing pressure to bear on governments that violate the rights of journalists. And we can, and do, urge American news organizations, in covering the political turbulence in places like Israel, South Africa, and Northern Ireland, to push hard against the limits imposed by suspicious or actively hostile governments. Not to do so is not only to deprive Americans

of important information relating to the internal affairs of these nations; it is also to break faith with reporters who live and work in those countries and who take the greater risk in daring to offend the powers that be.

## Darts and laurels

**Dart:** to the Brockton, Massachusetts, *Enterprise*, for solving a conflict-of-interest problem in a deceptively simple way. In a March 9 memo to suburban editor Robert Richards, Plymouth correspondent George Hanlon noted a difficulty that had arisen in connection with planning for coverage of an annual town meeting whose agenda included a controversial \$1 million proposal for road repair. The difficulty was that Lucy Shepherd, the regular beat reporter, also happened to be chairman of the advisory committee that was sponsoring the proposal, and thought "maybe someone else should be there." The only trouble with that, Hanlon complained, was that he couldn't know for sure when the day-long meeting would get to the road-repair issue, and he'd "hate to have someone waiting around for that one to come up." Hanlon's solution: "Could she use my byline and write the thing herself?" The answer, evidently, was yes: Shepherd's account of the meeting appeared on March 15, under Hanlon's byline, and carrying liberal quotes from Shepherd herself.

**Laurel:** to WCBS-TV, New York, and correspondent Barbara Nevins, for a dramatic demonstration of the ease with which a person who was so inclined could vote early and often in New York. Working undercover and trailed by hidden cameras, Nevins registered twice last February in Manhattan, where she lives, as well as in Brooklyn, Staten Island, Nassau County, and Queens, with no questions asked, and was admitted to vote in the April 19 primary six unchallenged times. Although Nevins cast only a single (and legal) vote, and although her investigation was not aired until after the primary, when it could not affect the outcome, her unsettling message of potential voter fraud prompted the city's board of elections to ask the district attorney to file charges against the messenger for violation of election laws. Quite sensibly, the request was denied.

**Dart:** to Daniel Witte, publisher of the News Publishing Company, owner of a chain of Wisconsin weeklies, for letting a pesky advertiser get under his skin. Bugged by threats from a pesticide purveyor to cancel future advertising because the *Mount Horeb Mail* had reported on a local farmer's claim that pesticide poisoning had ruined his health, publisher Witte responded by promptly firing Daniel

Wilson, the editor who had written the piece. ("In a small town there's so many interlocking relationships," Wilson later explained philosophically to the *Wisconsin State Journal*. "You've got to be ready to work with your hat and coat on.")

**Laurel:** to the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, for a page-one story by Michael Heaton and David Sowd in which it was revealed that local FM radio station WMMS, chosen for the past nine years in a *Rolling Stone* magazine's readers poll as "best radio station" in America, had as a matter of policy rigged the results by buying up hundreds of copies of the issue containing the ballots and distributing them to station employees, relatives, and friends. "Why have we gone through all of this year after year?" the station asked in a full-page ad in the next day's *PD*. "Just to win a popularity poll? No," it answered itself self-righteously. "WMMS has seen the impact of this award on the city and realized long ago that the positive recognition of the station translated as a source of pride for Cleveland . . . As a market leader, we enjoy the challenge to remain on top."

**Dart:** to such trend-setting publications as *Interview*, *Spy*, *Details*, *Paper*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *Chicago Metro*, and *L.A. Style*, for setting a most unfortunate trend: running individually designed ads that cleverly mimic their own particular editorial content, layout, and tone. As reported by Randall Rothenberg in the April 19 *New York Times*, a case in point was a recent campaign for Dom Ruinart champagne, for which several of the magazines not only sponsored parties at which pictures were taken for the "Sips and Spills" ads, but also recommended their own photographers to the advertising agency in the interest of authenticity. Of the magazines that were approached, Rothenberg reported, only *Vanity Fair* requested changes in the ad design that might keep readers from being fooled.

**Laurel:** to the reporters assigned to the North, West, and St. Charles offices of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, for instructing the paper's editors in a basic principle of journalistic ethics. Faced with a directive to help the advertising department solicit ads for upcoming suburban voters guides by providing the names and phone numbers of political candidates interviewed for the guides — a directive that had come from senior assistant managing editor Ron Willnow through suburban editor Nancy Miller and was supported by managing editor David Lipman — reporters at the three suburban offices swiftly responded with petitions and letters to management expressing their outrage at the "challenge to the time-honored separation of the advertising and news departments," and explaining the potential damage to the paper's credibility. Under threat of being disciplined for insubordination, the reporters eventually complied, but the furor appeared to have made some impression, at least, on managing editor Lipman: he later told the *St. Louis Journalism Review* that the request for the names and numbers had "been a temporary thing and will not be repeated."

**Dart:** to the Decatur, Illinois, *Herald & Review*, for its journalistic overdraft in covering the story of the face-to-face meeting between a Scottish woman and a local pro-

fessor who had become infatuated with her voice on an automatic bank-teller machine. ("Your transaction is processing" was her spellbinding line.) Sponsored by the paper, a travel agency, a food company, and a Decatur bank, the meeting between Richard Ferry, who also happens to be an *H & R* columnist, and Sally Masterson, who also happens to be a BBC radio talk show host, garnered some 300 column-inches (including 13 photographs), 48 of them on the *H & R*'s April 7 front page. "There are some who say that we have gone overboard on Sally and sensationalized her story à la Rupert Murdoch," the paper wrote in a defensive editorial at the end of the five-day "Sally Watch" orgy. "As for our coverage, we can assure you that you have missed nothing especially important locally or from the state, national, and international wires."

**Dart:** to *The Detroit News*, for gratuitously spilling the beans. The paper's lead "People" item on Sunday, April 10, not only revealed the "carefully guarded" identity of the new restaurant critic for *Detroit Monthly* magazine, but featured his photo as well; the item was addressed to local restaurateurs and headlined CLIP AND SAVE.

**Dart:** to the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, *Globe-Times*. In a splashy special edition unveiling its new look, new features, and new commitment to the community, to advertisers, and to local businesses, the paper carried a front-page statement by publisher Nancy A. Taylor noting, among other things, that the improvements had entailed a restructuring of the company that had "not been entirely without pain . . ." Adding piously that "we care about those employees whose positions were eliminated in the restructuring," Taylor went on to say, "To assist them in their transition, *The Globe-Times* is providing benefits such as special separation payments and highly skilled professional outplacement to assist them in securing new employment. We are truly sorry they will not be with us to share the exciting and dynamic future of our newspaper." What Taylor failed to mention, however, was the true extent of the pain. As reported by Paul Wirth in *The Morning Call*, in nearby Allentown, some of the longtime staff members who put out the "Celebration of Community" edition had been summarily fired for "unsatisfactory performance" just as soon as their deadlines were met; the separation package stipulated that, in exchange for severance pay, *Globe* employees would, among other restrictions, be barred for one year from working at any newspaper or broadcast job within twenty-five miles of the paper's Bethlehem office, and prohibited for two years from working for either of its two rivals, the *Call* and the *Easton Express*.

**Dart:** to the *Arkansas Democrat* and managing editor John Robert Starr, for less-than-heavenly journalism. The paper's regularly appearing op-ed page cartoon recently featured none other than "John Robert" himself as a "wonderful wizard" fighting for the "wonderful cause" of a state-government ethics bill and demonstrating the "courage to write for right." An earlier cartoon starred Starr as a dignified symbol of Public Service, steadily building a structure held together by Truth. ■

# GUESS WHAT WAS HAPPENING WHILE MOST REPORTERS WERE WRITING ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY?

Last year offered reporters plenty of big stories to sink their journalistic teeth into. Two of the most significant were the 200th anniversary of the Constitution and the revelation that the Justice Department was scheming to take over the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and other major unions.

While these stories were reported separately, few reporters had an opportunity to explore the connection between them. Our organization—Americans Against Government Control of Unions—thinks it's time for everyone to take a closer look.

The plan to take over these unions flies in the face of the Constitution and virtually every other legal document that guides this country. If unions are taken over on the basis of unproven allegations against a few leaders, what happens to due process? If duly elected union officials are removed, what happens to freedom of association? If the Justice Department puts officials who do not represent

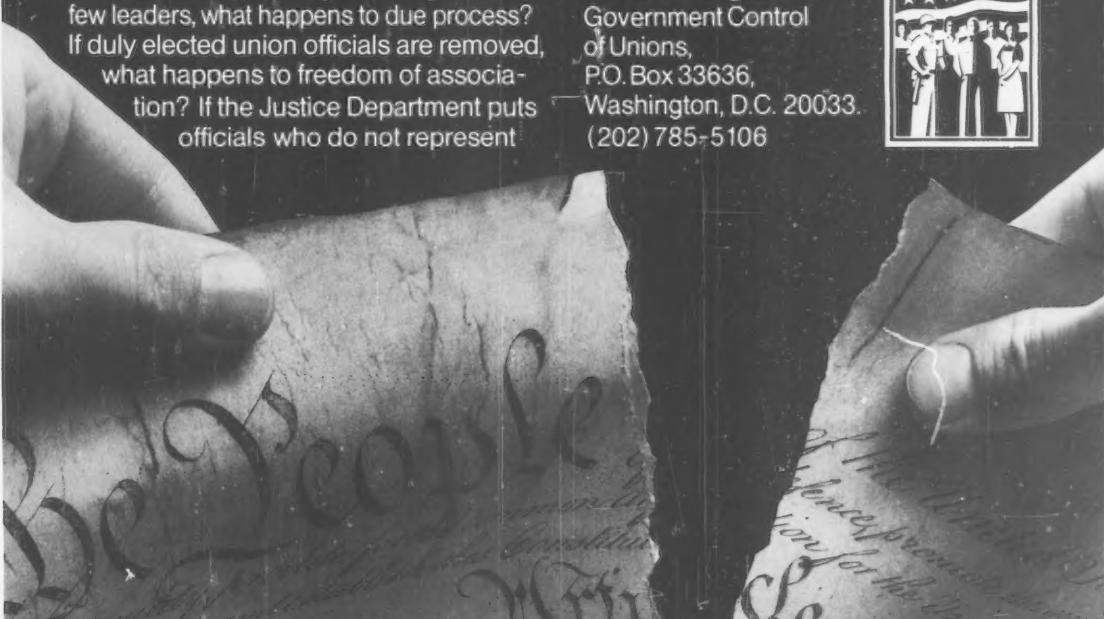
union members in charge of labor organizations, what happens to freedom of expression?

Think about it. If the Justice Department starts taking over independent organizations, such as labor unions, how is America different from those countries that have no Constitution to protect people's rights?

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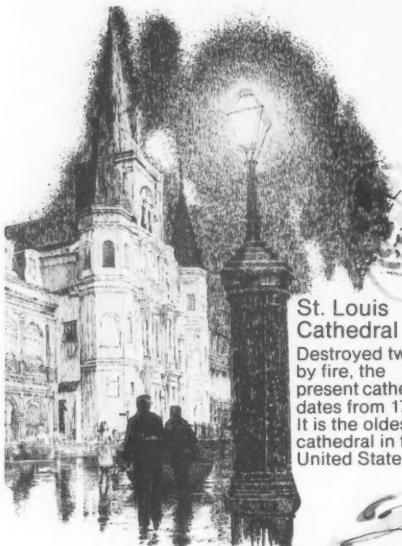
If you would like to know more about the Justice Department's takeover scheme and its ramifications for all Americans, please contact:

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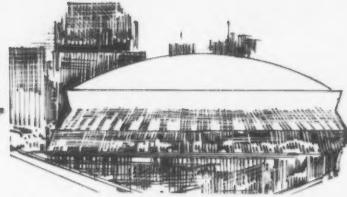
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Built in 1813, it is a place where Creole ladies and gentlemen flocked to buy food and exchange pleasantries. Today, it is still used as a market.

# BROKEN PROMISES

Many reporters are naming, or being forced to name, confidential sources.

The authors examine this trend — and warn of the danger it poses to a free press

by MONICA LANGLEY and LEE LEVINE

**L**ieutenant Colonel Oliver North and CIA Director William Casey discussed secret operations not only with each other but also with the news media — once they were guaranteed anonymity as sources of the information they provided. But the reporters who promised not to reveal their names, including *Newsweek* staff members and author Bob Woodward, subsequently decided to identify their sources publicly.

During the Iran-contra hearings, North testified that "leaks" had led to the publication of information about the interception of an Egyptian plane carrying the suspected hijackers of the *Achille Lauro*. Indeed, North testified that he believed the leaks "very seriously compromised our intelligence activities." Shortly after, however, *Newsweek* revealed that "the Colonel did not mention that details of the interception, first published in a *Newsweek* cover story, were leaked by none other than North himself."

In the last couple of years, investigative reporter Woodward's byline appeared above many exclusive stories in *The Washington Post* detailing controversial intelligence operations, including the Iran-contra affair, and he often attributed the information to "senior administration officials."

---

Monica Langley is a reporter for The Wall Street Journal and an adjunct professor at the Georgetown University Law Center. Lee Levine is a member of the Washington, D.C., law firm of Ross, Dixon & Masback, where he practices media law. Elizabeth C. Koch assisted with the research for this article.

In Woodward's book *Veil*, the now-deceased Casey was, for the first time, revealed as one of those officials.

Woodward takes the position that Casey's death relieved him of his promise to keep the former CIA director's identity confidential. "Agreements of confidentiality cannot extend to or from the grave," Woodward says.

The highly publicized and controversial revelations of Casey and North as confidential sources placed a spotlight on the emerging phenomenon of reporters breaking faith with their sources. In years past, reporters have gone to jail rather than reveal their confidential sources, but the reporter-source relationship has demonstrably changed.

Reporters now are revealing, or are under pressure to reveal, their sources for a number of reasons. One is the perceived professional obligation to identify the source when such disclosure is required to set the record straight, as in *Newsweek's* identification of North. Another is that failure to identify a source may mean the loss of millions of dollars in a libel suit.

Floyd Abrams, a prominent First Amendment lawyer, believes that, if this trend has not been widely recognized, this is because news organizations are reluctant to let the rest of the journalistic community know that they are breaking their promises. "There's a lot of fibbing on this," Abrams says. Rex Heinke, an attorney who represents the *Los Angeles Times*, among other publications, points out that the revelation of sources "isn't reported in decisions. It just happens."

"Reporters are finding new pressures on them to reveal

their confidential sources," says Stephen Hess, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a student of the press. "Breaking a pledge of confidentiality may stem from ethical or legal considerations, but it raises ethical and legal questions as well."

Investigative reporter Woodward observes, "This isn't simple — [a matter] of just deciding to break a promise, to break a pledge of confidentiality." He says that reporters generally agree to keep a source's identity secret until the source dies or releases the reporter from the promise of confidentiality.

"It's important to tell people when you can where information comes from," Woodward adds. "Death is the final release from the agreement." Other situations that might justify breaking a promise of confidentiality could be if a source who is providing information about a crime turns out to be involved in the crime himself "or if the source gives you bad information. Then," Woodward says, "the deal would be off."

A variation of breaking confidential pledges to sources could be a reporter's statement of who the sources are not. An example of this — and one that surprised many journalists — occurred when *The New York Times* early in the presidential campaign all but pointed reporters to one of the newspaper's secret sources. After the *Times* reported that Senator Joseph Biden had used a long passage taken almost

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‘Floyd Abrams believes news organizations are reluctant to reveal that they are breaking their promises: “There’s a lot of fibbing on this.”’

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verbatim from British Labour party leader Neil Kinnock in a speech at an Iowa candidates' debate, a controversy arose, not only about Biden's "character," but also about which rival campaign had furnished the *Times* with the so-called attack video that made clear the similarity of the two speeches. Several news organizations named Richard Gephardt's campaign as the possible source, until the *Times* reported that the Gephardt campaign "did not plant any Biden story."

By ruling out the Gephardt campaign, the *Times* ultimately contributed to the reluctant admission by the head of the Dukakis campaign that he had been the source of the *Times*'s information.

"I can't imagine that ten years ago *The New York Times* would have narrowed the field of its sources," says Harry Johnston, general counsel for Time Inc.'s magazine group. "This kind of action is symptomatic of the times, when reporters — and editors particularly — are less enamored of confidential sources."

**M**ost news organizations now routinely require reporters to reveal their sources to their editors, a practice that was once shunned both by investigative reporters and their editors. Several news organizations have adopted policies specifically stating that a commitment of confidentiality can flow only from the organization itself, not from an individual reporter. In the early 1970s, in stark contrast, the identity of "Deep Throat" was known to only one person at *The Washington Post* — Bob Woodward. Today, if a new Deep Throat offered his information to a reporter at the *Post* or at most other news organizations, an editor would most likely demand to know the source's identity.

The impetus for this change in policy was undoubtedly the Janet Cooke affair in 1981, when *The Washington Post* returned a Pulitzer Prize after learning that Cooke had fabricated her award-winning story about "Jimmy," an eight-year-old heroin addict. The *Post* reporter was nearly able to substitute fiction for news reporting precisely because she was not required to disclose her sources to her editors. The American Society of Newspaper Editors found that, after the Janet Cooke episode, it became a general rule for a reporter to share with an editor the identity of a confidential source.

Some libel insurers insist that the sharing of sources must go right to the top of a news organization. Reporters must identify their sources to the publisher "or we don't insure them," says Arthur Hanson, general counsel emeritus of Mutual Insurance Company, a leading provider of libel insurance.

It is in libel suits that reporters are under the strongest pressure to reveal confidential sources. In such litigation, reporters who refuse to identify sources are less likely to face incarceration than they are to be threatened with substantial monetary judgments against them and their publishers. A plaintiff may argue that the truth or falsity of an alleged libel can be determined only if the identity of the source is revealed. On occasion, judges agree, and order news organizations to disclose confidential sources.

In libel cases, as opposed to criminal cases, judges are free to devise alternatives to a jail sentence. The harshest penalty is a default judgment against the press defendant — a judgment in which the plaintiff is awarded all the damages he seeks. In *Georgia Communications v. Horne*, for example, a Georgia appellate court upheld a trial court's default judgment entered after a radio announcer refused to comply with an order to disclose the identity of confidential sources. The court rejected the announcer's argument that the default judgment was excessive punishment for a good-faith effort to exercise a constitutional right.

Another sanction available to the court when a news organization refuses to reveal a confidential source is to declare that, in that case, the jury may assume that no source exists. This means that the press defendant cannot use that source to prove that the published story was true. In *Laxalt v. McClatchy*, for example, a federal trial court ruled that McClatchy Newspapers would not be compelled to disclose the identities of its sources to Senator Paul Laxalt, but fur-

ther ordered that McClatchy would not be allowed to rely on information provided by these sources in its defense of Laxalt's libel action.

In another case, an Arizona judge ruled that if a reporter failed to reveal the identities of anonymous sources, the jury would be instructed that there were no sources for his news story for the purpose of the libel case. The reporter then decided to reveal the sources' names.

The risk of losing a costly lawsuit through the imposition of such sanctions has made news organizations increasingly likely to insist that their reporters identify confidential sources in legal proceedings. "There's some indication in the libel context that courts won't protect confidential sources or, if they do, there will be a negative impact on the press's defense," explains Henry Kaufman, general counsel of the Libel Defense Resource Center.

A case in point is that of a former Iranian hostage who, in 1981, brought suit against the Los Angeles *Daily News* for libel, based on its report that narcotics officers expected that he would be asked questions on why he had entered Iran, including questions about drugs. When the reporters refused to divulge their sources in pretrial proceedings, a default judgment was granted to the former hostage and the publisher ordered the reporters to reveal their sources. They did not have to do so, however, because the judge subsequently lifted the default judgment, at the same time ruling that the reporters could not cite in their defense any sources other than those which had been previously identified.

The trend toward requiring reporters to inform their employers of their confidential sources' identities, coupled with the pressure on news organizations to reveal those sources in litigation, means that reporters are facing the growing prospect of losing control over whether their pledges of confidentiality will be honored. Some news organizations are seeking to prepare reporters for this eventuality; others are encouraging reporters to weigh carefully the sort of

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Bob Woodward

anonymity agreements they work out with sources while allowing the reporters to make the ultimate decisions.

*The Wall Street Journal* is taking the latter approach. In an effort to educate reporters on the implications of their agreements with sources, the paper has circulated a memorandum to all of its bureaus. The memorandum, signed by managing editor Norman Pearlstine, states, "There is a difference between anonymous sources and confidential

sources. An anonymous source is one whose name we've agreed to leave out of the paper but whose identity we may later need to disclose — in the event of a libel suit, for example — in order to show that we had good reason for using the information.

"A confidential source," the memo continues, "is one whose name isn't published and whose identity we are pledged to keep secret, even if that means losing a lawsuit or going to jail. Obviously, reporters and editors need to be especially careful before agreeing to confidentiality, and

**'Today, if a new Deep Throat  
offered his information  
to *The Washington Post*,  
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to know the source's identity'**

especially before publishing material obtained from a confidential source."

NBC has reportedly prepared a similar memorandum to be distributed to its news staff. Harry Johnston of Time Inc. says that the confidential versus anonymous distinction is "sensible."

As news organizations come to grips with the reality that a pledge of confidentiality to a source will not in all cases be honored, it is inevitable that disputes will arise between the reporter and the source concerning the legal ramifications of their relationship. Indeed, it is not surprising that sources might seek legal redress for the perceived breach of what they view as a reporter's "contractual" undertaking to protect the source's identity. Perhaps it ought to have been expected that judges, like a Minnesota trial judge in *Cohen v. Cowles Media Company*, would also characterize the arrangement between reporter and source as a "contract," and hold each party legally responsible for damages caused by the "breach" of a contractual commitment.

In *Cohen*, a reporter for the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* pledged confidentiality to public relations executive Dan Cohen for what appeared to be a newsworthy political story: on the eve of statewide elections, Cohen told the reporter that the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, Marlene Johnson, had been convicted on a minor shoplifting charge twelve years earlier. (Court records show that the conviction was later expunged.)

The reporter returned to the office to find that her editors were not committed to keeping the confidence. They demanded to know the source and, when they found out he had ties to the Republican party, insisted that Cohen be named in the stories. The editors viewed the fact that one party would resort to what they perceived as a last-ditch effort to malign the other to be as important as the shoplifting story itself. The article appeared the next day, containing

both the charge against Johnson and the name of the newspaper's source.

Johnson won the election, but Cohen lost his full-time job at one of the area's largest advertising agencies. He sued the newspaper for breach of contract. The court denied the newspaper's motion to have the case dismissed, adopting the source's claim that the First Amendment does not give a news organization the right to breach a contract. The case is still in litigation.

A similar claim was brought by a source in a California court. In *Fries v. National Broadcasting Company*, the source, a policeman, spoke with a reporter about the alleged improper behavior of an assistant chief. After the reporter revealed the policeman's identity in order to gain access to a private meeting, the policeman sued, claiming that the reporter had breached an oral contract to keep his identity confidential. The court held, among other things, that the source's complaint stated a valid claim for breach of contract, but required the source to prove that the reporter had acted with malice as a condition for recovering damages. The case was eventually settled after one trial ended in a hung jury and a second trial had already commenced.

In many ways the bargaining that goes on between reporter and source over the ground rules for an interview resembles the negotiations that lead up to the signing of a contract. Ultimately, however, there is a fundamental difference between the kind of commercial activity that is typically the subject of contracts, on the one hand, and the gathering and reporting of news, on the other — a difference that makes the law of contracts and the First Amendment strange bedfellows. Enforcement of the law of contracts depends upon government, in the form of its courts, to compel one party to a transaction to pay damages to the other when a contractual obligation has been breached.

In the commercial sphere, this role of government makes sense. The parties to a commercial relationship, once a dispute has developed between them, sorely need and generally want an impartial arbiter both to identify the scope of their contractual commitments and to enforce a remedy for their breach. In many ways, dispute resolution in this form has traditionally constituted an essential and basic purpose of government.

In the First Amendment context, by contrast, there is a significant price to be paid when the government, even in the form of courts, is called upon to resolve disputes concerning the publication of news. When a reporter publishes the identity of his source — even when the reporter has previously promised that source confidentiality — he is publishing accurate information.

If the source resorts to the courts to enforce the commitment made by the reporter, he is, at bottom, asking the court to penalize the reporter for publishing accurate information. If the court awards damages, it is in effect levying a fine upon the reporter for publishing the truth.

Under the contract model of the reporter-source relationship, moreover, public officials — the sources most often promised confidentiality — would have the power to call

upon the courts to punish reporters who accurately identify them as sources of published information. In periods of heightened tensions between the government and the press, public officials would, as a practical matter, have access to a powerful weapon with which to punish reporters through litigation.

It can be expected that, if the contract model gains currency, reporters will avoid making promises to at least some sources for fear that the law will later second-guess their own judgments concerning the publication of a particular source's identity. In the end, giving sources a breach-of-contract claim against reporters may lead, not to greater willingness to confide in reporters, but rather to an atmosphere in which reporters will be extremely reluctant to establish confidential relationships.

Some media lawyers contend that allowing reporters to break their promises of confidentiality without being held accountable could, in the long run, undermine press rights. "If reporters identify sources — even if compelled by a judge or to bolster their own credibility — the press runs the risk of hurting its argument that it needs confidentiality to protect newsgathering," says David Bodney, a Phoenix media lawyer. Floyd Abrams cautions, "It's not easy to say we can't reveal a confidential source in one case but can in another."

Perhaps more important than consistency, however, is the basic constitutional principle that removes from the gov-

**'Reporters are facing the growing prospect of losing control over whether their pledges of confidentiality will be honored'**

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ernment, and from its courts, the ability to regulate the news. Judges hearing future claims by sources alleging breach of contract would be wise to heed former Chief Justice Burger's admonition that:

The choice of material to go into a newspaper, and the decisions made as to limitations on the size and content of the paper, and treatment of public issues and public officials — whether fair or unfair — constitute the exercise of editorial control and judgment. It has yet to be demonstrated how governmental regulation of this crucial process can be exercised consistent with First Amendment guarantees of a free press as they have evolved to this time.

It may simply be more important that the government be kept out of the business of penalizing the publication of news, including a source's identity, than that confidential sources be compensated for damages suffered as the result of a reporter's broken promise. Ethical, not legal, considerations should determine whether a journalist, once having promised confidentiality, should go back on his word. ■

True confessions I

# Confessions of a stakeout artist

by RICHARD ROGIN

I am your ordinary everyday stakeout artist. I deal in the minima of ABC's *World News Tonight* — the ten-second walk, the recorded history of comings and goings, something akin to the herky-jerky footage of old silent films. Some of the subjects are resigned to the public performance; others are awkwardly elusive. Sometimes there is just a car with someone ambiguously within.

You've probably seen us in some of our favorite public roosts. Television cameramen and soundmen, producers and still photographers clustered in all kinds of weather, say at the top of the steps of the United States District Court on Foley Square in Manhattan. We're hanging around, waiting for another big one, like a flock of impatient diurnal owls, heads swiveling, panning back and forth with our eyes as people flood into the courthouse from all angles. We're on the hunt for various mafiosi or

*Richard Rogin has worked at ABC News for eleven years. He explains his title as follows: 'I am known as a field producer, though there is no 'field' except in a wildly metaphoric sense; I do not specialize in events at places like Runnymede or Woodstock. The only meaning of the term is that you are away from the desk.'*

insider traders or whatnot, an Anthony (Tony Ducks) Corallo or Ivan Boesky, a General Sharon or a General Westmoreland, trying to spot them at the maximum range to get the longest roll.

The vivid gallery of stakeout names evokes a nostalgic montage. Consider the savage stakeout for Bernie Goetz, the subway gunman, and his lawyer, Barry Slotnick, as they emerged after Goetz's first day on trial in Manhattan Supreme Court from the judges' back door on White Street and tried to turn the corner onto Lafayette.

Overlapping volleys of questions were hurled as we bumped and pushed against them, everybody trying for the best position. Cameras were jostled, a cardinal sin, because a shaky picture is never tolerated by an executive producer unless an H-bomb is going off under your feet. In the hubbub, a cameraman heard Slotnick say, "This is worse than the subway." Finally, Goetz and Slotnick retreated inside the courthouse until the press civilized itself.

And then there was the chase after Ivan Boesky, king of the insiders, from Pearl Street, up the narrow dead-end street known as Cardinal Hayes Place, behind the federal courthouse in Man-

hattan, on the day he pleaded guilty. As the rigid, impassive Boesky, flanked by his lawyers, marched up the alley, still photographers and TV crews rushed up from behind to surround them. They enveloped Boesky and his outriders like a malign organism, the stills pressing their small black cameras practically against his nose and holding on like leeches, backpedaling recklessly, a couple falling to the pavement in the confusion, while a cacophony of shouted questions went unanswered. It was all reminiscent of what British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once said about her campaigning experience: "I was also cocooned in cameras. . . ."

When I'm assigned to "stakes," as one of my editors calls the bread and butter of TV news, my mission is the obligatory pursuit of a few seconds of video walk to cover a line of narration about someone notorious or famous or evanescently "in" the news. It's even better if I manage to get a soundbite, in this case a brief coherent answer to a pithy question. I will say anything, or almost anything, to make the subject pause or turn his head to the camera in wary courtesy before he's up the steps and into the courthouse or down the steps



Mario Suriani/PhotoReporters

**Getting Goetz:**  
Reporters and  
cameramen scramble  
for position as  
Bernhard Goetz  
emerges from a  
Manhattan court  
after a jury found  
him innocent of the  
attempted subway  
murder of four  
teenagers.

and into the car.

"*Buon giorno,*" I sang out to a "Pizza Connection" defendant arriving for court, before asking a quick question about the latest shooting. Two defendants had been shot down, one fatally, during the long drug-smuggling trial. He replied with a wonderfully expressive "What can I tell you?" gesture — arms extended, palms open and upraised.

Then there was my brief encounter with Jackie Presser, the Teamsters' president. I asked him if he was concerned whether he would end up like Jimmy Hoffa. "You ought to be a magazine writer," he growled at me as though it were a terrible insult, moving with that surprising fat man's swiftness up the federal courthouse steps in Cleveland.

Even my own correspondent thought the question was asinine. But I was rather proud of the query; anything else, I thought, would be inanely obvious. This was at a time when published rumors — later confirmed by the government in court — were flying off Lake Erie that Presser was an FBI informer. You have only a few seconds for the Q & A before the subject's gone, and sometimes the provocative question gets results.

Of course, it helps to have a touch of rhino in your hide if the subject turns on you. When a \$2 billion Iran arms sting case was being tried in New York, I hurried after a defendant, Samuel Evans, an American lawyer who for many years was counsel to Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi arms dealer and a major player in the Iran-contra affair. I wanted to get his reaction to the prosecutor's rather pointed characterization of him as "motivated only by greed." Okay, I concede that the inquiry is a bit harsh when a man is walking hand in hand with his wife, as Evans was. He didn't even turn his silent, stony visage then, but much later, in court, where no cameras were allowed, I tried again for an interview. He gave me a basilisk glare. "Mr. Rogin," he said gravely, "I find you personally offensive."

You lose some, win some. As they say, it comes with the territory.

All the time I'm waiting for stakeout subjects to appear, I'm plotting my moves, trying to work out the logistics, the positioning to get the best picture, or any picture at all, wistfully speculat-

ing on the person's psychology. Will he brave the mob of press cameras head-on, plunge into the crowd of extras, the curious and the kibitzers and the crazies, all acting out for the cameras? Will he come through the front door or duck out a rear exit? How many doors are there anyway?

Will I have just one camera crew to cover all the doors or can I get more? Two crews is usually ideal. The "tight" crew gets the "bites." Another, "cut-away" crew shoots the scene panoramically or from a different angle, getting ambient sound. The "wide" shots will be used later in the edited piece for visual variety, literally "cutting away" from the person. His "sound" can even overlap the cutaway picture.

If he's new to our public stage, have we all studied Xeroxes of an AP photo or even some old high-school head shot taken from a newspaper? Does anybody have a rough physical description so he won't just walk right by without our noticing him? Often we have nothing to go on. Is that his car or does he have a Dial-A-Ride around the corner? Have we checked for getaway cars? Where is that black Lincoln Town Car parked?

And then, all of a sudden, the target appears. Tally ho! "There he is! Roll!" I yell needlessly as the camera crews scramble and jostle and bump for position. "Down stills!" shout the TV people. "Stills out of the way!"

**O**nce, in the unforgivable innocence of my novitiate as a TV producer, I cried out, "Shoot him!" to my cameraman as a minor hoodlum approached the United States District Court in Newark. The hoodlum was shielding himself and his wife from a light rain with an umbrella. Luckily, he didn't seem to hear me as we sprang out of the car, but I've never forgotten the possible consequences of that ill-chosen verb.

The tidal mass of press flows up and down steps, down streets, around buildings, across lobbies and into elevators, squeezes violently through doors (yes, even, somehow, through revolving doors). This is traditional robust American journalism and only the targeted subjects and the squeamish might complain about harassment or civil liberties at such a crucial time. The government

has accused or is investigating; the public has the right to see. Usually we are after presumed malefactors, not grieving families. A morality play is unfolding before a massive audience.

The chase has historically involved hard, somewhat clumsy, work for the crew, even after the electronic marvels of the video age replaced film a decade ago in the TV news business. The cameraman runs a punishing obstacle course with his twenty-pound camera and battery on his shoulder, while the soundman, attached to his partner by an umbilical-like cable, totes a forty-three-pound recorder, with all the trappings, plus a three-pound boom mike. But the future is upon us as television stations are beginning to convert to what is known as the "one-man band." New technology allows the cameraman to operate alone, using any one of several cameras plugged right into a recorder with higher-resolution half-inch videotape instead of three-quarter-inch tape. The composite elongated camera, known generically as a Betacam, weighs about thirty pounds. Tune in to see if the stakeout artist will become obsolete, too, as he was in *Max Headroom*, which, in turn, is pretty much extinct itself.

Occasionally, a crew member will fall over a hydrant or off the curb as the pack surges after an Abbie Hoffman, John Gotti, Anthony (Fat Tony) Salerno or Paul (Big Paul) Castellano, a Bernhard Goetz or a Claus von Bulow, a Michele Sindona or a Reverend Sun Myung Moon, a John Zaccaro and a Geraldine Ferraro, or a fast-striding John DeLorean or Raymond Donovan.

I should end with an apology/no apology to Donovan, the former secretary of labor, who wondered, somewhat testily, why we needed the thousand-and-second picture of him the Saturday night before his acquittal as the camera crew spotlighted him in the dark outside Bronx Supreme Court after another long day.

Welcome, Mr. Donovan, I said to myself, to the wonderful world of stakes, where a "today" picture is a must and a good soundbite — I can almost see a cartoon mouth opening and the teeth crunching out the words — is almost paradise, provided it makes sense in, say, nine seconds.

"Don't you have enough?" he asked. I grinned sheepishly, as though I were

really a grownup. "You're news, Mr. Donovan." That magic word, that anything-goes license to play stakes even if just one side is playing. If you're pressing a bit hard, you can always use a sly

variant and suggest that some off-the-wall editor has ordered you to the scene and you deplore taking the picture as much as the subject deplores having it taken.

But the short answer is we *never* have enough. The camera's red light is on. The videotape is unwinding. Picture and sound are being recorded. *Something might happen.*

## True confessions II

# Confessions of a travel writer

by JEREMY WEIR ALDERSON

From my point of view, I had done everything right. True, I had accepted an all-expenses-paid stay at the Westin Kauai, one of the newest and most luxurious hotels in the Hawaiian islands. But that was at my magazine's behest (I had, in fact, tried to turn down the assignment). That my article would not be properly labeled as the product of a freebie wasn't something I could do anything about.

What I was concerned about was avoiding any act that might imply that I, myself, was in some way being bought. For that reason I returned the polo shirt with the Westin insignia, made

it clear to the Westin p.r. person that I didn't feel myself in any way obligated ("Nor should you be," she replied), and even went around asking pointed questions about safety and environmental impact.

So it was with a clear conscience that I returned home and told my editor, "That Westin Kauai is one of the ugliest hotels I've ever seen. Being there opened my eyes to a new level of what can go wrong with hotel planning."

"Well, you can't write that," she answered without a moment's hesitation. "Westin paid for the trip."

It was business as usual at the travel trades.

Frustrated, I called up the editor of another travel-industry publication. She had been trying to lure me over to her book with the promise of increased pay

and the chance to do unfettered investigative reporting. The first such article was to be about car-rental companies in California that, allegedly, charged inflated rates for what seemed to be collision insurance but then turned around and billed consumers for repairs in the event of accidents. That article was starting to sound pretty good to me, but when I got the editor on the line she said, "Forget it. My publisher said we'd lose too much advertising." I'd been stung again.

This unending pandering to any hotelier or travel promoter who might buy an ad or provide a free trip makes the lords of every two-bit tourist fiefdom think themselves above journalistic law. Asking hard questions of these executives is considered as tasteless as it would be, say, for a television news an-

*Jeremy Weir Alderson has been a contributing editor of a number of travel-industry publications. He is currently writing a book about LSD.*



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chor to ask our vice-president about allegations of criminal conspiracy.

A case in point: in a travel piece on Palm Beach I alluded to that city's history of anti-Semitism and racism. (My editors cut this section down but, to their credit, printed some of it.) I subsequently got a letter from Jesse D. Newman, president of the Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce, asserting (in caps, yet) that my "PARAGRAPH . . . ABOUT JEWS AND BLACKS . . . WAS NOT ONLY IN BAD TASTE BUT OFF COURSE FOR THE TYPE MAGAZINE AND ARTICLE YOU WERE ASSIGNED TO WRITE." Obviously, he got that idea from experience.

What's more, after a few years of working within the constraints of the field, travel editors seem to take on the attitudes of the industry they cover. I don't know how else to explain incidents like one involving my Hawaii piece.

Just for the perverse pleasure of it, I'd handed in an extra sidebar, modeled after *Esquire's* "Dubious Achievement Awards." Under the heading "Next Year Let's Pretend We're on the *Titanic*," I had reported that "a major Hawaiian events company offers a theme party at which participants are placed 'under arrest,' thrown in the 'drunk tank,' and served a dinner that includes 'mush on broken plates with bent spoons and an insult from the surly guards in dirty uniforms.'" Upon reading that description, my editor said, "Gee, that party sounds like fun. How come you didn't write it up in the main body of the piece?"

I don't think things are much better at travel magazines intended for the general public — as compared with those aimed at people in the travel business. I once sat with an editor at *Travel & Leisure* who explained to me point-blank that "what we practice here is the Pollyanna school of travel writing." They've got advertisers, too.

Even publications that, like *The New York Times*, turn up their noses at free trips, touch those same noses to the ground before Pollyanna's altar. They seem short on the will to investigate the underlying realities of the travel industry (though I must note that in a piece on Palm Beach, the *Times*, too, mentioned anti-Semitism). When they do delve

deeply, it is usually not in their travel sections.

Just in case anyone is wondering what there might be to investigate in the travel industry, I'll point out that, depending on whom you talk to, tourism (including hotels, airlines, buses, attractions, etc.) is either the largest or second-largest international industry. It is, I believe, impossible to name another industry of anything approaching its magnitude that has been investigated so little.

Sure, tourism *can* be "broadening," but it also can pollute environments, spread disease (e.g. AIDS), damage cultures, and corrupt national economies. But if you raise such matters with travel editors, you are, usually, not only ignored but patronized, as though failure to subscribe to advertising exigencies makes you some kind of puddinghead. I know, because I have been a victim of the dreaded Puddinghead Syndrome.

**O**nce, on my way to work at a midtown-Manhattan-based travel trade, I passed the usual quota of wretched-looking homeless people and wondered if that sight might one day become so unpalatable as to affect New York's travel business. When I got to the office I suggested researching an article on that topic. You should have heard the uproar.

For months, editors in that office taunted me by adding the word "homeless" to my every assignment, asking questions like, "Hey, Jeremy, I hear you're doing the 'Refurbishing Your Golf Course and the Homeless' piece. Ha ha ha." But I persisted.

Finally, at *Travel Weekly*, sometimes referred to as the travel agent's Bible, editorial director Helen Zia (I mention her name because I think she deserves credit) said I should go ahead and do a piece on tourism and the homeless. Well, as it turned out, there were many connections.

Low-income housing is sometimes torn down to make way for such tourist-attracting projects as convention centers, thereby creating homelessness. Feeding stations are moved and homeless people are harassed in order to keep them away from tourist sites. And guides, such as some of those in Washington, D.C., do their best to sugarcoat the inevitable sight of homeless people — e.g., outside

the White House — by "explaining" to tourists that there's plenty of shelter space available but some people just won't use it.

Some months after my piece appeared, Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, quite possibly the foremost such school in the nation, drew a connection I had missed. Recognizing that the particular skills of hoteliers could be applied to more than luxury hotels, Cornell instituted a course on "Housing and Feeding the Homeless." This may have been the first such course at any business school, preparing upwardly mobile students to help the poor. *Business Week* wrote about it. So did *The New York Times*. But *Travel Weekly*, now minus Helen, wasn't interested in an article about the course. *Hotel and Resort Industry* magazine wasn't interested either, pleading excess inventory. Only *Travel Weekly's* sister publication, *Meetings & Conventions*, to which Helen had now moved over as editor, printed the item.

Lest I sound, by now, intolerably holier-than-thou, I must plead for leniency by virtue of extenuating circumstances. It was just my misfortune to get stuck a while back with writing an article for *Meetings & Conventions* titled "When Does A Gift Become A Bribe?" critically examining the many inducements given away by the travel industry. Is it my fault that after that nobody tried to buy me off?

Speaking with the editors of one industry publication, I even went so far as to shed crocodile tears over the slim pickings available to me. They all allowed as how they were not similarly handicapped. "You'd be shocked at what your own editors have taken," said a senior figure whom I actually like a lot and respect. "I once attended a conference and found fifty dollars in my room. I figured it was supposed to be all-expenses-paid and this was just their way of making sure all the incidentals were covered. So I took it."

And why not? Why should editors hold themselves to higher standards than the publications they edit?

I am sure there is no shortage of chortling pomposity with which to answer that question. But, to my eyes, the fact remains that most travel writing simply dishonors our free press. ■

# Nicaragua's free-fire journalism

In a time of truce,  
the war is being waged in the news media

by MICHAEL MASSING

Like much else in Nicaragua these days, the radios in taxicabs seldom work. So I was pleasantly surprised to find myself one morning traveling in a cab tuned to Radio Periodico, one of the many news programs that have flourished in Nicaragua since censorship was eased earlier in the year. As we wound our way through the streets of Managua, the voice on the radio suddenly grew urgent. At that very moment, we were informed, Sandinista police were descending on the headquarters of an independent trade union where workers were conducting a hunger strike. Policemen were arresting demonstrators in front of the building and barricading the workers within.

"The government is carrying out brutal repression against the workers!" the announcer shouted. "Radio Periodico expresses its solidarity with those on strike." The station began playing a tape that had been recorded on the spot a short time earlier. For five minutes we heard no comment or analysis, only shouts, whistles, horns, scuffling, and snippets of angry argument: "What are you doing, man?" "The constitution . . ." "Just like Somoza . . ."

Later in the day, hundreds of young newspaper vendors fanned out across Managua, hawking that day's edition of *La Prensa*. News of the confrontation was splashed across the front page. THREE STRIKERS GRAVELY ILL — POLICE ARREST MORE WORKERS the headline proclaimed. Three large photos showed the police manhandling protesters. "The terror that began unfolding at 9:30 in the morning," *La Prensa* wrote, "could continue in the coming hours, given the widespread rumor that local mobs . . . await the signal to assault the union office."

The next morning, Nicaragua's two pro-Sandinista dailies, *Barricada* and *El Nuevo Diario*, hit the streets with their version of events. "The Sandinista police," *Barricada* reported, "had to adopt preventive means in the face of provocations by construction workers, who . . . hurled insults against the agents of order and tried to block traffic." The story was relegated to page five; on its front page, *Barricada* instead chose to feature an article about Tomás Borge, the interior minister, visiting with children orphaned by the war.

So ended another day in the wild world of Nicaraguan journalism. Since last August, when the Sandinista government signed the Arias peace plan, committing itself to full freedom of expression, the country has exploded with news

*Michael Massing is a contributing editor of the Review. Research for this article was underwritten by the Fund for Investigative Journalism.*

and information. Three daily newspapers, dozens of radio stations, political party organs, intellectual journals, a satirical weekly — all are rushing to take advantage of the new openness. Nicaragua today is a land of electrifying headlines and thundering editorials, crackling interviews and tart talk shows.

Not all controls have been lifted. There remains on the books a general media communications law that empowers the government to impose penalties on news organizations for reports deemed harmful to the "consolidation of the revolution." And in May the government suspended several radio news programs and issued guidelines designed to limit criticism of government figures and of military recruitment practices. Nonetheless, Nicaragua's news outlets currently constitute the country's most vital arena of political activity. "The war has changed from the military front to the political and ideological one," observes Sofía Montenegro, a senior editor at *Barricada*. "And the media are the chief battleground."

It's a good thing Nicaragua doesn't have strong libel laws; otherwise, its journalists would have to pass most of their waking hours in court. The concept of objectivity or even fairness simply does not exist in Nicaragua; passion, partisanship, and personal attack are the norm. To opposition journalists, the Sandinistas are *totalitarios* whose acts

**Born again:** Publisher Violeta Chamorro holds up the October 1, 1987, issue of *La Prensa* — the first after a 15-month shutdown ordered by the Sandinista government.



Reuters/Bettmann

of repression and brutality place them on a par with Hitler. To Sandinista journalists, the contras are *mercenarios* whose hands drip with the blood of women and children. Last April, when the contras came to Managua for peace talks, they had less trouble with the Sandinista government than with the Sandinista press. One press conference broke down when a Sandinista radio reporter began hurling epithets at a contra representative, calling her, among other things, an "assassin of children."

The most virulent language appears in Nicaragua's three daily papers. It is here that the ideological struggle is most fiercely waged. *La Prensa*, *Barricada*, and *El Nuevo Diario* are more than just newspapers — they are national institutions, each summing up a way of life, a state of mind. The papers' circulation figures are closely watched as barometers of national political opinion. (As of early May,

**'We have a double mission,'  
says Carlos Fernando Chamorro,  
the editor of *Barricada*.  
'One is to be informative;  
the other, formative.'**

*La Prensa* sold 85,000 a day, *Barricada* 75,000, and *El Nuevo Diario* 65,000.) The sense of competition is sharpened by the fact that all three papers are managed by members of the same family — the brothers, son, and widow of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the *La Prensa* editor who was martyred in 1978. Reading Nicaragua's newspapers, I couldn't decide if I was witnessing a great debate being played out on the stage of world history, or a messy family squabble being conducted in front of the whole neighborhood.

Oddly, of the three papers, the one that at first glance seems the most American is *Barricada*, the official organ of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN). Visually, it is the most appealing of the three. *La Prensa* and *El Nuevo Diario* teem with insistent headlines and jumpy typefaces; *Barricada* has a modern, streamlined look, with crisp layout and sharp graphics. The paper also adheres to the basics of American newspaper journalism, packing leads with the five Ws and recounting events in descending order of importance.

There, however, the resemblance ends. "We have a double mission," says Carlos Fernando Chamorro, the editor of the paper (and a son of Pedro Joaquín). "One is to be informative; the other, formative." In other words, *Barricada* seeks not only to inform the masses but also to mobilize them. Thus, when the government in February announced an austere new economic policy — one that would sharply reduce purchasing power — the paper devoted its energies to rallying the troops. LET'S TAKE TO THE STREETS ON THE 26TH! declared one headline. THE PEOPLE PREVENT ECONOMIC COLLAPSE asserted another. Journalistically, *Barricada*

seems a bizarre marriage of East and West, combining American-style reporting with Leninist notions of the news-paper as organizer. It's an uncomfortable mix.

Unlike *Barricada*, *El Nuevo Diario* is an independent paper, owned by its staff; strangely, though, it tends to be even more shrill than its ideological bedfellow. The paper came into being in 1980, when *La Prensa*'s increasingly critical stance toward the revolution caused its staff to split; those sympathetic to the Sandinistas eventually left to form *El Nuevo Diario*. Today, the paper claims to be both supportive and critical of the government. And, on occasion, it lives up to that standard. Last February, for instance, the paper, intent on exposing the use of state-owned cars for private purposes, sent a photographer to spend a Sunday at a resort lake. The next day, photos of seven government vehicles appeared on *El Nuevo Diario*'s front page, their license-plate numbers plainly visible. "What happened to autoridad?" read the caption.

Alas, such enterprise is rare at *El Nuevo Diario*. Reporters who take the paper's claims of independence too seriously can quickly find themselves out of a job. William Grigsby discovered that last year. Grigsby, the paper's news editor (and a member of the Sandinista Front), assigned a reporter to interview a well-known theater director who had recently resigned from the party. The resulting story, which was mercilessly frank, embarrassed party officials, who responded by revoking Grigsby's own membership. Allowed to remain at the paper, he continued his hard-hitting ways, assigning reporters to probe such sensitive topics as bureaucratic bungling at the housing ministry. It was all too much for the powers that be, and by mid-1987 Grigsby was gone.

"I still support the Sandinista revolution," says Grigsby, who now works at a state-owned radio station. "But I have a different idea [than *El Nuevo Diario*] of how to do journalism. I believe that being critical is intrinsic to journalism. Everyone, everything, can be criticized." He adds: "That's the way all young journalists here think." Unfortunately, old journalists still prevail at *El Nuevo Diario*.

If there's one subject that *El Nuevo Diario* and *Barricada* delight in criticizing, it's *La Prensa*. They variously refer to it as the "bulletin of the U.S. Embassy," the "unconcealed mouthpiece of the mercenary forces," the "paper edited by the CIA in Managua." In one particularly nasty editorial, *Barricada* accused *La Prensa*'s editors of justifying the mutilation of children. In another, it challenged the editors "to demonstrate — if they can — that they don't have blood on their hands." Earlier this year, *Nuevo Diario*, seeking to mock *La Prensa*'s ties to the United States, began running a series of fictional letters between Violeta Chamorro, co-owner of *La Prensa*, and President Reagan. "My dear Ronny," began a typical letter.

The sharpest stab came on Sandinista TV. In February it began airing a political spot that intercut scenes of war with a photograph of Violeta Chamorro. The message, which ran every half hour, was clear: *La Prensa*, by embracing the contra cause, bore responsibility for the violence ripping the country. The propaganda effort prompted a storm of



**Remembering a martyr:** Marchers shouting opposition slogans in the streets of Managua mark the tenth anniversary of the 1978 murder of *La Prensa*'s implacably anti-Somoza editor, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro. Many Nicaraguans believe that today he would be just as implacably anti-Sandinista.

protest in Managua as well as Washington and the government eventually removed it from the air.

That the Sandinistas would resort to such hardball tactics is hardly surprising. During the 451 days when *La Prensa* was silent, the Sandinistas enjoyed a monopoly on information; now that the paper had reopened, the government was seeking ways to neutralize its influence. The most obvious tool — censorship — was not available. Last September, when the government signaled its intention to let *La Prensa* reopen, the paper's owners insisted that they be allowed to publish free of control. They remembered only too well the nightmarish web of censorship that had enveloped them during *La Prensa*'s previous life. The paper could not mention the name of Alexis Arguello, a renowned boxer who sympathized with the contras, or publish a photo of Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. When the paper planned to run a story about the World Series headlined CARDINALS WILL BE CHAMPIONS, the censor — worried lest someone draw a religious inference — insisted that "Cardinals" be changed to "St. Louis."

Now, for the first time since 1979, *La Prensa* was appearing without restriction, and it was causing plenty of headaches for the government. When basic grains disappeared from the marketplace, *La Prensa* was there to photograph the empty stalls. When mothers marched against the draft, *La Prensa* was there to interview them. When Sandinista mobs went on a rampage, *La Prensa* was there to chronicle the damage. In one delicious scoop, the paper recounted how some Sandinista officials, enjoying advance knowledge of a change in monetary policy, used their soon-to-be-worthless currency to go on a wild shopping spree. Little wonder, then, that the government was seeking to make life difficult for the paper.

Yet that's only part of the story. For *La Prensa*'s coverage has at times been so extreme as to seem intentionally de-

signed to provoke the government. Early this year, for instance, the paper reprinted an article from a Costa Rican newspaper charging that the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro had been instigated by elements connected to the FSLN. A more incendiary charge could hardly be imagined. While Chamorro's murder has never been conclusively solved, it is almost universally blamed on Anastasio Somoza. Today, the editor's memory is honored by government and opposition journalists alike. Now *La Prensa* was alleging that Chamorro's death was the work of the FSLN. Challenged to back up the story, the paper could not.

Such efforts at discrediting the government are commonplace. *La Prensa*'s attacks on Sandinista recruiting practices have been so relentless as to seem a call to draft resistance. The paper, while rarely reporting on government speeches, regularly reproduces press releases from the opposition, often under inflammatory headlines. (An example: FSLN THREATENS, LIKE SOMOZA.) It's not uncommon for *La Prensa*'s entire front page to be given over to stories damaging to the government.

Moreover, *La Prensa* habitually reprints allegations about Sandinista excesses without bothering to check them out. In January, for instance, the paper printed a front-page story about an underground prison allegedly maintained by the Sandinistas. The story was based entirely on a letter sent by peasants in a remote village; no one was sent to check out the charges. That, however, did not prevent *La Prensa* from running a sensational headline — 120 HOSTAGES LIVE IN UNDERGROUND PRISON — and comparing the prison to "Treblinka and other Nazi concentration camps."

The intensity of *La Prensa*'s animus against the Sandinistas is matched only by its esteem for the Nicaraguan Resistance, as the contras are known. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, Jr., a son of the late editor, gave up his position as an editor at the paper to join the contra leadership. Earlier



this year, when the contras came to Managua for cease-fire talks, they made a much-publicized pilgrimage to the offices of *La Prensa*; the meeting quickly turned into a celebration. In the pages of the paper itself the contras are never portrayed as anything less than freedom fighters.

“*La Prensa* is almost a propaganda pamphlet for the Nicaraguan Resistance,” says Dionisio Marenco, director of the FSLN’s Department of Agitation and Propaganda, a secretive bureau that coordinates Sandinista relations with the news media, domestic and foreign. “In the entire United States, I don’t think there’s a paper that says the types of things *La Prensa* does,” says Marenco, a stocky man with a dark, bushy beard. He wistfully adds that he would like to see the paper “adopt a better tone — more serious, more balanced, more informative.”

The offices of this fabled, controversial institution are housed in a plain, squat building located on a major Managua thoroughfare, named, appropriately enough, after Pedro Joaquín Chamorro. I dropped by one afternoon to talk with Jaime Chamorro, one of the paper’s principal owners (and brother of Pedro). Jaime Chamorro was editor of *La Prensa* until it was shut down in 1986; he now sits on the paper’s board of directors, helping to set its overall editorial policy.

I asked Chamorro about *La Prensa*’s seeming reluctance to report on abuses committed by the contras. “It’s true that there have been abuses on both sides,” said Chamorro. Nonetheless, he asserted, *La Prensa*’s approach was justified. The government has made “enormous propaganda” out of contra misdeeds, he said, “sending out to the world the message that the contras are criminals. We are not going to help the Sandinistas with their exaggerations.”

I took out a copy of *La Prensa* that I happened to have with me. Its headlines read: ‘POPULAR TERROR’ AGAINST WORKERS; RN [Nicaraguan Resistance] ACCUSES SANDINISTAS OF TORPEDOING THE PEACE; MONETARY REFORM — GRAVE ECONOMIC THREAT. I asked Chamorro whether he thought the paper’s credibility was hurt by its never-ending cannonade against the government. “You may have a point,” he said. “In fact, we have tried to run other types

of stories — for instance, news of social interest. But we never really succeed at it. The problem is that *this* — he pointed to the front page — “is what people want to see.”

Chamorro, a beefy man with large jowls and thick glasses, bears a strong resemblance to his late brother. I could tell because Pedro Joaquín’s photo hung on the wall behind him. Taken in the mid-1950s, the photo showed a youthful Pedro Joaquín in guerrilla garb — a reminder that his entire life was dedicated to Somoza’s overthrow. As a youth, Pedro Joaquín pursued the struggle through arms; later, *La Prensa* became his chief weapon. Pedro Joaquín’s relentless attacks on the dictator helped gain the paper its reputation as a bastion of press freedom. They also gave the paper a highly partisan cast — a tradition that endures to this day. Jaime Chamorro is a prominent member of the Conservative party, a hard-line anti-Sandinista group. Its statements generally receive prominent coverage in the paper.

Chamorro sees little wrong in this. “Many journalists who come here think that we should be like *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, offering different points of view,” he told me. “But we can’t be objective. This is a war — not of arms but of ideology. We’re engaged in a life-or-death struggle. If the Sandinistas consolidate their system, *La Prensa* dies.”

**T**hroughout our discussion, Chamorro was busy placing long-distance phone calls. The subject: newsprint. In Nicaragua, all newsprint is controlled by the government, which in turn receives it from the Soviet Union. A Soviet ship had recently arrived with a new supply, but port congestion had delayed its unloading. Meanwhile, national stocks were dwindling, and *La Prensa*, its supply exhausted, had been forced to close for six days. A loan from archenemy *Barricada* had allowed it to reopen, but *La Prensa* now had enough only for a few days. The paper’s plight was making headlines around the world; the fate of press freedom in Central America, it seemed, hinged on *La Prensa*’s ability to scrounge up some newsprint.

The paper had located a stopgap source in AmeriCares, a Connecticut-based foundation (see sidebar), which offered to donate fourteen tons. But there was a problem: the Sandinistas, angry at the Reagan administration’s continued trade embargo against Nicaragua, had informed the private sector that it could no longer import products directly from the United States. The proclamation of the ban, however, was intended primarily for public consumption — a means of pressuring the White House to relent. Privately, the government told *La Prensa* that it could import the newsprint as long as it came via a third country. So Chamorro was now trying to convince a company in Honduras to accept the AmeriCares contribution and transfer an equivalent amount to Managua.

Having heard all this, I was surprised when, two days later, *La Prensa* ran an editorial blasting the government for denying it permission to accept the AmeriCares donation. The editors denounced the government’s “strict control” over newsprint, which, together with President Ortega’s “monarchically decreed” prohibition on donations from abroad, “makes our existence very precarious.” No-

where did the editorial mention the government's willingness to let the paper bring in the newsprint through a third country. *La Prensa*, fighting a war to the death, apparently views all weapons in that struggle as legitimate.

In any case, the whole matter soon became moot, as I found a few days later during a return visit to *La Prensa*'s office. The Soviet ship had at last been unloaded and its precious cargo dispatched to Managua. I arrived to find a truck backed into *La Prensa*'s loading dock, disgorging 300-kilogram rolls of newsprint marked "Made in the USSR." The trucks arrived throughout the day, delivering 700 tons in all — enough to keep the paper going for three or four months. Thus did Soviet generosity help keep the flame of press freedom alive in Nicaragua.

**F**or all the attention accorded Nicaragua's news-papers, they are not all-powerful. Nicaragua is a mostly rural country, and the papers don't circulate in many regions. Even where they do, a high rate of illiteracy keeps many people from reading them. In Managua, meanwhile, a sharp decline in purchasing power has put the papers out of the reach of many people. (*La Prensa* costs 10 córdobas — the daily minimum wage is about 50 córdobas; the other two papers cost 5 córdobas.) For middle-class Nicaraguans, the press remains an important shaper of opinion; for the rest, radio reigns supreme.

Especially now. Nicaraguan radio is experiencing a remarkable renaissance. From March 1982, when a state of emergency was imposed, until January 1988, when it was lifted, live news was banned from the radio, and two dozen news programs were forced off the air. Now the programs are returning, and listening has become a real adventure. Turning the dial in my hotel room, I heard lively call-in shows, outspoken editorials, disco music, talk shows, on-the-spot reports, interviews with contra leaders, American '50s music, dispatches from correspondents in Miami, baseball scores, public-service notices, reggae, political speeches, readings from the Bible, announcements of labor rallies, and spots for opposition parties.

There was also plenty of government news. Nicaragua has not one but two official stations. That may sound redundant, but the two strenuously compete with one another. Radio Sandino was born in the late 1970s as the FSLN's clandestine station; after Somoza's overthrow in 1979, it continued to operate as the Sandinista Front's own station. By contrast, La Voz de Nicaragua began transmitting only in 1979 as the official station of the Nicaraguan government. Radio Sandino, as a party station, features highly politicized fare aimed at deepening *la revolución*. La Voz de Nicaragua emphasizes programs of general community interest.

La Voz (the Voice), as it's generally called, is far more popular, thanks largely to a program called Contacto 620 (after the station's frequency). Broadcast for four hours every weekday morning, Contacto 620 serves as a kind of national bulletin board for ordinary Nicaraguans. A woman whose husband has gone off with another woman calls to urge his return — all will be forgiven. A man whose car has been stolen asks to be called by anyone spotting it. People call about trash not collected, water mains not re-

paired, policemen stepping out of line. In some cases, Contacto 620's staff gets the responsible official on the line, demanding an explanation. Not surprisingly, the program is widely loathed by bureaucrats.

There are other critics as well. Opposition journalists disdain Contacto 620 for concentrating on superficial matters while ignoring more pressing political issues. Ironically, many Sandinista officials agree. The Department of Agitation and Propaganda, for instance, is known to dislike the program, believing that it offers too much bellyache and too little explanation. "The DAP hasn't liked us for some time," says Roberto Gonzalez, one of the show's creators. "They would like us to spend more time making statements and doing interviews. That's what Radio Sandino does, spending its days making political blah-blah-blah. If we did that, we wouldn't be so successful. We give confidence to the people by expressing what they are saying and feeling." The formula certainly seems to work. "With all its defects and limitations, La Voz is the top station in the country," Gonzalez boasts. "In fact, we're the only state radio station in the world that is number one in audience ratings."

It's unclear, though, how long La Voz can retain that position. "La Voz is number one when there is censorship," says Julio Armas, the local correspondent for the Voice of America. "But without censorship it can't compete with the private stations." At the moment, Nicaragua's independent stations face a multitude of problems — poor equipment, a scarcity of vehicles, a lack of skilled personnel; it's estimated that 80 percent of all non-Sandinista radio journalists have left the country. What the stations lack in resources, though, they make up in energy.

No station has been more aggressive than Radio Corporación. Prior to 1979, it was the most listened-to station in the country. It is now seeking to regain that status by offering blanket coverage of the opposition. One recent morning the station ran a long interview with contra military commander Enrique Bermudez; not too long ago, this would have been unthinkable. Throughout the day, the station broadcasts a time-of-day service announcement — introduced by a spokesman for the Conservative party, who pointedly proclaims his party's opposition to dictatorship "in all its forms."



The station's director, José Castillo, is himself an active member of the Conservative party. I spent two hours with him one morning in his office, located in a middle-class Managua neighborhood. Castillo is a burly man with a boxer's build, which is somehow fitting, given the constant jabs he takes at the Sandinistas. During our talk, I noticed on his bookshelf, among volumes by Jean-François Revel, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Shirley Christian, a tome by Lenin. When I called attention to it, Castillo took down the book and, leafing through it, declared, "I read this to know what is happening here in Nicaragua."

To give me an idea of what his station was broadcasting these days, Castillo picked up an editorial that he planned to air that afternoon and, shifting into a rich, resonant radio voice, began reading: "All efforts at dialogue with Sandinismo have resulted in failure, because the ideology it professes is incompatible with liberty, democracy, and peace."

## ***La Prensa: the CIA connection***

Ever since the Sandinistas took power, *La Prensa* has played an important role in the drama of Nicaraguan politics, offering its readers an account of events differing radically from the official version provided by the government-controlled news media.

To explain why they have harassed, censored, and even closed down a paper that, for many, has come to represent the survival of press freedom in Nicaragua, Sandinista leaders have repeatedly charged that *La Prensa* has been secretly funded by the CIA, and that it is, in fact, a covert weapon of the U.S. government aimed at overthrowing the Sandinista regime.

How true are these charges, which have been consistently denied by the paper's owners? A year-long investigation, including a review of tax records and documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act or released by congressional committees, supports the Sandinistas' long-standing charge. *La Prensa* has received covert funding not only from the Central Intelligence Agency, but also from the secret network coordinated by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, the former National Security Council official and central figure in the Iran-contra scandal.

Within six months after the Sandinistas took control of the Nicaraguan government in July 1979, President Carter authorized the CIA to provide covert financial support to the domestic opposition, including *La Prensa*. According to a former high-ranking Carter administration official with detailed knowledge of the operation, the CIA used third parties — known in the intelligence business as "cutouts" — to send printing equipment and other supplies needed to rebuild *La Prensa's* plant. The plant had been destroyed in the final days of the insurrection that toppled the Somoza dictatorship and brought the Sandinistas to power.

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For several minutes Castillo read on, castigating the Sandinistas as a "totalitarian government" engaging in "infantile games." Rather strong, I remarked when he was done. "All my editorials are strong," he replied. "We're taking advantage of this little amount of light available to us to give our opinions. If we don't, we'll lose that light."

Castillo's tough stance highlights a key problem that the Sandinistas face in this invigorating post-Arias era. Based on my talks with Sandinista officials, I'm convinced that they are willing to put up with a considerable amount of criticism. Nicaragua is in dire need of Western assistance, and the Sandinistas know that they must keep the press free in order to keep the tap open. They ask only that journalists act as a loyal opposition — critical but not subversive. The problem is, Nicaragua's journalists refuse to comply. Reporters, editors, and broadcasters have taken advantage of their new freedom to challenge not only the government's

by JOHN SPICER NICHOLS

Soon after his inauguration in 1981, President Reagan authorized expanded covert operations in Central America, including the funding of propaganda and political activities in Nicaragua. There is no hard evidence that *La Prensa* received such funding. However, perhaps significantly, within months after Congress voted in October 1984 to end CIA operations against Nicaragua, private foundations linked to North's covert network and to the contras began to supply *La Prensa* with newsprint and other materials.

One of the suppliers was the National Endowment for Democracy, a private foundation proposed by President Reagan and funded by Congress to foster democracy abroad. Although the endowment is ostensibly autonomous, it became closely linked both to the National Security Council and to the surrogate funding network for the contras. Since its inception, the NED has spent more than \$1 million on anti-Sandinista media and political groups, many of which have thinly veiled ties to the contras and the CIA.

According to documents obtained under the FOIA, the NED was closely supervised by Walter Raymond, Jr., a top NSC official and a collaborator with North on various covert propaganda projects in support of the administration's policies in Central America. Raymond, a veteran CIA propaganda specialist with overseas experience in covert operations, was detailed to the NSC in 1982 by CIA director William Casey.

Since 1985, *La Prensa* has received four grants, totaling \$282,500, from the endowment. The first two NED grants were administered by Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA), a Washington-based organization which was quietly lobbying on behalf of the contras. However, in 1986, when PRODEMCA began advertising in major newspapers in support of renewed U.S. government funding of the contras, the NED severed its relationship with PRODEMCA. It was subsequently revealed that the primary source of funding for the ads was

policies but its very legitimacy. And that the Sandinistas will not tolerate.

**A**n incident that occurred toward the end of my stay indicates where things may be headed. Radio Corporación, seemingly intent on testing the government's patience, was alternating highly favorable reports on the contras with frequent bulletins on the progress of the hunger strike. At one point, the station even compared the Sandinistas to the Nazis. Enraged, Interior Minister Tomás Borge summoned José Castillo to his home for a dressing down. Borge became so agitated that at one point he actually socked Castillo in the mouth. Castillo took the punch — then rushed out to spread the word about his experience. The AP promptly sent out a photo showing a pained Castillo holding down his lip to reveal a large, ugly contusion.

Nicaragua's media war promises to get bruising.

an organization run by Carl "Spitz" Channell and Richard R. Miller, both of whom later pleaded guilty to conspiring with North to illegally aid the contras.

Miller was a principal in two of North's front organizations. One was the Institute for North-South Issues (INSI), which North made use of to launder millions of dollars for the contras, and which simultaneously administered \$493,000 in NED grants unrelated to the contras. The other was International Business Communications, which received a secret contract from a State Department office supervised by Raymond and North. Under the controversial and potentially illegal contract, Miller and his associates were paid to generate anti-Sandinista publicity by bringing contra leaders and opposition politicians, including *La Prensa* editors, to the United States for visits to media organizations and Capitol Hill, and by ghostwriting op-ed articles for them.

In the weeks preceding the 1986 congressional vote on renewed military aid to the contras, a host of articles by five different *La Prensa* staff members denounced the Sandinistas in major newspapers throughout the United States. For example, an op-ed piece by Roberto Cardenal, one of several signed by top *La Prensa* editors to appear in *The Washington Post* during the three months prior to the vote, grew out of a tour of the United States sponsored by INSI. In the article, which was reprinted in a number of U.S. newspapers and transmitted worldwide by the U.S. Information Agency, Cardenal described Sandinista repression of his newspaper and concluded: "The international propaganda machinery of the Sandinistas aims to present us as traitors to the motherland who have sold out to Ronald Reagan." (Cardenal now lives in exile in Costa Rica, where, with NED funding, he runs an anti-Sandinista research-and-publication organization.)

In 1986, the NED transferred the *La Prensa* account to Delphi Research Associates, a Washington-based nonprofit corporation which administers millions of dollars in U.S. government contracts. While Delphi is widely regarded as a reputable government contractor, its project coordinator

Reuters/Bettmann



**Hands-on critic:** After a radio announcer compared the Sandinistas to the Nazis, Interior Minister Tomás Borge called him in — and punched him on the mouth.

for grants to *La Prensa* is Henry R. Quintero, who formerly was executive director of the Institute for North-South Issues and who had coordinated the Cardenal media blitz.

Another organization linked to North's private network, AmeriCares Foundation of New Haven, Connecticut, gave direct assistance to *La Prensa* and the contras at the same time. The tax-exempt foundation, created in the early 1980s to provide humanitarian aid to foreign refugees, shipped more than \$100,000 worth of newsprint to *La Prensa* in 1985 and 1986.

On its 1985 tax return AmeriCares reported that it had delivered \$73,136 worth of food and medical supplies to *La Prensa*; however, Jim Schaffer, a former AmeriCares official who supervised the delivery, is certain that only newsprint was sent. AmeriCares also claims on the return that it donated another \$291,383 in food and medicine and \$5,750 in cash to Mario Calero, paymaster of the contras and brother of top contra leader Adolfo Calero.

Some members of AmeriCares' advisory committee have provided financial or political support for the contras, and several are associated with the Reagan administration. The tax records also indicate that AmeriCares is financially linked to a variety of other individuals and organizations that supplied the contras or were working with the CIA in Central America.

Not all of the foreign assistance that has flowed to *La Prensa* originated with organizations like PRODEMCA and AmeriCares. Loans, grants, newsprint, and printing machinery have also come from such sources as the Inter American Press Association, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, of West Germany, some Venezuelan businessmen, and a group of Norwegian newspapers. So far as the record shows, none of these gifts or loans was associated with support for the contras.

But the record clearly shows that most U.S. aid to *La Prensa* was an integral part of a campaign to help the contras overthrow the Sandinista government. Whether this justifies efforts to silence a powerful critical voice is, of course, another question.

# Covering medical 'breakthroughs'

Too many reporters — and editors — are suckers for the miracle-cure story

by JIM SIBBISON

**A** *Newsweek* cover story about heart attacks last February had good news for healthy men: they can reduce the risk of an initial attack by nearly 50 percent by taking an aspirin every other day. "The sound of medicine cabinets snapping open echoed across the country," staff writer Matt Clark wrote. "And no wonder." Aspirin, he said, had "scored another one for pharmacological history." A headline over the article, which was based on a study published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, called the finding a "breakthrough."

Others in the media also treated the finding as settled scientific fact. A headline in *U.S. News & World Report* referred to a "Miracle Drug in the Medicine Chest." "The life-saving effects were so dramatic," Harold M. Schmeck, Jr., wrote on the front page of *The New York Times*, that, after nearly five years, "the study was halted in mid-December so that the results could be reported as soon as possible to the participants and to the medical profession in general." On ABC's *World News Tonight* doctors said that they themselves would take aspirin as a heart-attack preventive and would advise their patients to do so.

Two days after publication of the *New England Journal* article, new evidence called the accuracy of these stories into question. A *British Medical Journal* study had found that aspirin could not prevent initial heart attacks. Some reporters refused to retract. As Philip J. Hilts wrote in *The Washington Post*, the British themselves acknowledged that their study should be discounted in favor of the larger U.S. trial. In a story from London in *The Boston Globe*, Richard

A. Knox explained that the British investigators believed that, taken together, the studies showed aspirin "can probably avert about one-third of all non-fatal heart attacks." However, Knox wrote, since both studies also showed a higher incidence of strokes among subjects taking aspirin, "some researchers here . . . conclude that, for people who have no known risk of heart disease, any aspirin benefit from lowering the rate of heart attacks may be offset by raising the rate of hemorrhagic stroke." The Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission asked aspirin manufacturers to refrain from advertising their product as a preventive of an initial heart attack.

Medical scientists often criticize the news media for proclaiming major breakthroughs on the strength of what are, in fact, no more than tentative findings. The typical research study — inconclusive and in danger of being contradicted by a future, equally competent investigation — can come to seem, in the press, of much greater importance than the evidence warrants. In his 1985 survey, "Science and the Media," Jay A. Winsten of the Harvard School of Public Health cited this as the chief fault that scientists find in science newswriting. But the scientists can't rightfully unload all the blame on the media. Some of them can, on occasion, be found egging on the press with exaggerations of their own.

To be sure, what they tell reporters is basically what they report in the research studies they publish in the medical and other scientific journals. There are many of these, both foreign and domestic; three that are particularly popular in U.S. newsrooms are *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *Science*, the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Sci-

ence. As Sally Squires observed recently in *The Washington Post*, these three journals "help determine what America knows about medicine."

These journals generally seem to enjoy a good reputation among medical newswriters, who are reassured by the fact that studies published in them are subject to peer review. This means that they have been certified as sound by scientists uninvolved in the particular research at hand, but knowledgeable about the general field of inquiry. Compared to the measures taken by other institutions to gain publicity, those taken by journal editors — press releases, plain-language summaries of technical articles, tie-in press conferences and interviews with the authors — are considered low key and helpful.

**I**t would be a mistake, however, to assume that scientists maintain a laboratory aloofness in their presentations. Needing media attention to advance their careers and to win fame and money, scientists often resort to sophisticated p.r. techniques. Even the sober *New England Journal of Medicine* saw fit in 1983 to publish a long article advising scientists how to deal with — and duck — reporters' questions. "If you feel trapped by a question you wish to avoid answering, obfuscate," wrote the author, Martin Bander of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "The [editors] will edit out a response that is too long, convoluted, overly technical, meaningless, or obscure. Another technique is to change the subject with a deft, lateral arabesque."

Journal editors also write editorials that flag as important sometimes difficult technical reports and that provide reporters with quotable words of praise. Dr. Arnold Relman, editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, used this device in an editorial about aspirin and

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heart attacks in which he lauded the new study as a "milestone," provided its conclusions stood up under further evaluation. In the aspirin story by Tom Maugh II in the *Los Angeles Times*, this was simplified to an unconditional "milestone." Relman also acknowledged the existence of the as-yet-unpublished conflicting British study but provided no details and said the smaller sample and larger dosage "may well account for the difference between its results" and those of the U.S. trial. Apparently taking their cue from the editorial, reporters generally played down or omitted mention of the British study in their original stories.

A notable exception was Dick Thompson of *Time* magazine. He heard out the case for the U.S. study, and then, although lacking the full *British Medical Journal* study, called the British investigators. His piece gave equal weight to the two reports and accurately concluded that the preventive effects of aspirin remained "something of a mystery."

Thompson does not consider Relman and others involved in the aspirin research as deliberately manipulative, but he thinks that as a general rule journalists should resist being caught up in boundless, uncritical enthusiasm for a scientific project. "Scientists, like generals and politicians, have very narrow views," says Thompson. "So you have to fit their views into a larger context."

The reality, as John Bailar III, a U.S. scientist at McGill University in Mon-

treal who is a frequent contributor to medical journals, points out, is that "breakthroughs are extremely rare. You don't have one every day or even every year." Also, equally sound studies can reach opposite conclusions. Bailar himself was involved in one such case, in which conflicting studies were published in the same issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*. One found that taking estrogen pills to relieve post-menopausal discomfort increased the risk of heart attacks in women; the other found that it reduced this risk. Bailar wrote an editorial in the *Journal* about the conflict. "At least one of the studies was not right," he recalls. "They may both have been wrong."

The physicians and scientists who read these journals recognize that the articles published in them can turn out to be a lot less than definitive. The late William A. Nolen, author of *The Making of a Surgeon* and other books, as well as of a medical column that appeared in *McCall's* magazine, once wrote about a major monthly surgical journal that ran a regular "reappraisal" section. In it, an expert would take a second look at a "breakthrough" that had been announced a year or two earlier. "Often this reappraisal would amount to a negation of the previous article," Nolen reported.

Nolen used to warn readers to be particularly skeptical about any story that "seems on the surface to be a bit far-fetched." A candidate for that category,

in the view of Alvin Winder, a research scientist in public health and psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, was a story about suicide that got a lot of media attention in 1986. The news was that teenage suicides rise after the airing on television of news stories and fictional movies about suicide. The source was a pair of studies in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. On their face, says Winder, the studies were not particularly convincing.

This time Daniel Q. Haney of The Associated Press, for one, brought in a critical view high in the story. Dr. James Mercy of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta told Haney that neither study showed that the victims had actually seen the broadcasts. Jim Schachter of the *Los Angeles Times* and Jerry Bishop of *The Wall Street Journal* also consulted critics of the studies. However, William Raspberry, a *Washington Post* syndicated columnist, was sufficiently concerned to warn broadcasters and editors to "pay heed" to the studies lest they cause more suicides.

A year later *The New England Journal of Medicine* published a University of California follow-up study that found no increase in teen fatalities following TV showings of suicide movies. The authors of the original research — Madelyn S. Gould of Columbia University and David Shaffer of the New York State Psychiatric Institute — said in a letter to the *Journal*: "No single study is likely to provide conclusive evidence with re-



spect to the impact of media on suicide." The mass media, which had given such prominent play to the original story, gave far less play to the story casting doubt on it.

Scientific disagreements become more heated when they are tinged with politics. This applies to biomedical science in particular. Almost every news story about the link between industrial chemicals and cancer conveys, implicitly at least, a political as well as a scientific message. Some scientists believe the cancer risk from pollutants is serious; others disagree, asserting that industry is being required to pay high costs to control a risk that is essentially trivial.

Bruce Ames, a prominent biochemist at the University of California at Berkeley, belongs to the second camp. In an article in *Science* in April of 1987, Ames and his colleagues reported that the cancer risk from such foods as raw mushrooms, basil, and peanut butter and such beverages as wine, sake, and beer is many times greater than the hazards posed by pesticide residues on food and by other synthetic chemicals. Ames was subsequently quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying that he wanted to demonstrate that the government, by regulating man-made chemicals, was pursuing "hundreds of minor or nonexistent hazards."

"A peanut butter sandwich . . . has ten times the cancer-causing potential of a serving of bacon [which contains carcinogenic nitrosamines]," wrote Washington AP science writer Warren Leary, citing Ames. Jane Brody used Ames's data as the subject of one of her Personal Health columns in *The New York Times*. A modified version of Ames's table ranking carcinogenic hazards, headed HELP IN WEIGHING THE ODDS, accompanied her column.

Ames's claims were presented as unassailable science. They weren't, as a page-one story in the *Times* two weeks later made clear. The authoritative National Academy of Sciences, Philip Shabecoff reported, had just completed a two-year study of chemical pesticides for the Environmental Protection Agency. Far from believing that the government was pursuing minor or nonexistent hazards, as Ames would have it, the academy found that the "nation's food supply is inadequately protected

from cancer-causing pesticides." The report, Shabecoff wrote, "listed fifteen foods, starting with tomatoes, beef, and potatoes, that presented the greatest 'worst case' risk of cancer because of the presence of twenty-eight specified chemical pesticides." In an interview with Shabecoff, Charles M. Benbrook, executive director of the academy's Board on Agriculture, disputed Ames's conclusions. Ames, he said, had failed to take into account "the most recent and complete data." Other scientists took issue with Ames in the correspondence section of *Science* magazine. One letter writer said it was doubtful that peanut butter is a human carcinogen. Another said that cooking alone can reduce or destroy some of the natural contaminants in food. Judging from newspaper indexes, the mass media took little note of these dissenting views.

**T**om Maugh of the *Los Angeles Times* was one of the few reporters, if not the only one, to address Ames's scientific politics. Maugh wrote in a front-page piece in the *Times* that environmentalists have "long considered Ames an apologist for industry." Lawrie Mott of the activist Natural Resources Defense Council told Maugh that Ames had done "a serious disservice to standard public health policy." Lawrence Garfinkel, director of cancer prevention for the American Cancer Society, agreed with Ames that accurate risk assessments of chemicals at extremely low doses cannot be made. Even so, he added, "we have to let people know about potential carcinogens and take steps to protect them." Asked why he checked with so many authorities, Maugh explains, "Bruce Ames and the safety of foods are very controversial. We would not publish a story like this that relied on one source."

Cristine Russell, president of the National Association of Science Writers and presently on leave from *The Washington Post*, believes all medical news stories should contain more than one perspective. Now studying health-risk assessment on an Alicia Patterson Foundation fellowship, she says: "We didn't do a great job in the seventies when 'everything caused cancer.' Now we need to remember that there is no single truth about toxic chemicals. For

every scientist on one side, you've got one on the other. We should try to put these controversies into perspective. Not just 'Dr. X said yesterday that he's done research that says A,B,C,D' and stop there. It's necessary to get other experts in the field to help you make sense of these journal articles."

Stories about cosmetics research call for particular vigilance. As Allan Parachini wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* last January: "Sometimes, using prominent physicians as spokesmen, cosmetic companies in the last few years have tried to market a wide variety of products said to induce the smoothing of wrinkles." The heart-transplant pioneer, Christiaan Barnard, he noted in passing, had participated in a promotion of skin-care products which "failed in the midst of publicity over questionable claims made on their behalf."

Parachini's observations were contained in a story about new research findings that still another skin cream, Retin-A (generic name, tretinoin) could erase wrinkles, a story widely played last winter. Parachini was quite upbeat about Retin-A. While pointing out that the research had been financed by the product's distributor, Ortho Pharmaceuticals, a division of Johnson & Johnson, he quoted Barbara Gilchrest, a dermatologist, as calling the finding a "major, major breakthrough." Brenda Coleman of the AP also noted "partial funding" by Ortho, and pointed out that there had been "hoaxes and false starts" in the past. But this time, she wrote, researchers were convinced that Retin-A had "finally proven effective." Coleman added that Dr. Gilchrest had given assurances that the researchers were "credible and the quality of their work was excellent." Less impressed, Alex Beam of *The Boston Globe* expressed curiosity about skin-cream and aspirin companies that use media publicity about research findings to increase sales.

What gave the Retin-A study its cachet was that it was published in the usually cautious and restrained *Journal of the American Medical Association*. But even the title of the *JAMA* editorial evaluating the research sounded promotional. It read: "At Last! A Medical Treatment for Skin Aging." The author of the editorial was the same Barbara Gilchrest — she is chief of dermatology

at Boston University's School of Medicine — who talked to the *Los Angeles Times*, the AP, and others in the media. She wrote: " 'We sell hope' . . . Only a few years ago this much-quoted self-assessment of the cosmetic industry accurately portrayed the state of the art. No sophisticated consumer, let alone scientist, had any expectation that the unattractive concomitants of skin aging could truly be reversed. The [Retin-A study] suggests that a new age has dawned." Once past her introduction, however, Gilchrest proceeded to admit shortcomings in the study: it was small (only thirty subjects); there was no follow-up examination after four months; it was unknown whether benefits would continue after treatment stopped; side effects of dermatitis could be worse in general usage. "The average improvement," she acknowledged, "was quite subtle and hence may not satisfy the expectations of a demanding public for long." Reporters had a choice between hyperbole and sober fact.

For his lead in *The Wall Street Journal*, Michael Waldholz preferred qualified hyperbole. He wrote: "Johnson & Johnson may have stumbled upon a fountain of youth cream, according to preliminary research released yesterday." Parachini of the *Los Angeles Times* observed that "a medical milestone almost as eagerly sought as the fountain of youth appears to have been reached." *U.S. News & World Report*,

in a piece bearing the headline "A Face Lift out of a Tube," said the fountain of youth is now located "in your neighborhood pharmacy."

In one of her press interviews, dermatologist Gilchrest observed that Retin-A "is not going to make your friends think you've suddenly found the fountain of youth." That realistic assessment was in line with the findings of reporters who did not rely solely on the promoters of the skin cream. Alison Bass, for one, had a story in *The Boston Globe* three weeks before the news conference at which Retin-A findings were announced. "Many dermatologists," she wrote, "question Retin-A's effectiveness. . . . It does not, for instance, eliminate the major wrinkles that occur in aging skin." Sources contacted by *The New York Times*'s Gina Kolata told her the Retin-A study was too small to be conclusive. John J. DiGiovanna of the National Cancer Institute told Terence Monmaney of *Newsweek* that no one knows if the wrinkles will soon return. "Despite the caveats," Monmaney wrote, "Wall Street was ready to drink at the fountain of youth. Stock for Johnson & Johnson . . . climbed eight points in two days."

The trouble with good medical reporting is that stories that are properly qualified and shorn of unwarranted superlatives tend to be low in news value. Stories that say a salve performs miracles are more attractive than ones that

say there may be flies in this particular ointment. Harvard's Jay Winsten observes in his study of science news that this presents a dilemma for journalists. "Science reporters based at preeminent publications," he writes, "stated that competition for prominent display of their stories creates a strong motivation to distort their coverage."

As a U.S. biomedical researcher of long experience, John Bailar of McGill University believes some of his fellow scientists also get caught up in this distortion. "A medical writer," he says, "is not going to write a story about a tiny advance. He's got to make it something bigger. The scientists are responding to this. I think they're at fault also because they get their points — promotions, salary, academic rank, esteem among their colleagues, grants for research — by making big advances instead of little advances. Both sides have a lot of incentives to overwrite what's been done. Both sides are in a kind of collaboration in overstating the advances in medical research."

That seems to leave the burden of providing accurate medical news to the men and women on the desk. For them, a simple test is available: if the story includes words or phrases such as "for the first time," "cancer-causing peanut butter sandwiches," "dawn of a new age," "milestone," or "breakthrough," a second scientist's opinion may be in order.



C.J.R. Michael Barbara

# Telling the West Bank story

## A frontline report

by JOEL GREENBERG

On a cloudy day in mid-January a group of Israeli soldiers prepared to take on a crowd of Palestinian boys who were pelting them with stones at the al-Amari refugee camp in the West Bank. The soldiers stocked up on tear gas grenades and rubber bullets, and strapped on their helmets, in full view of a battery of television cameras lined up behind them.

Before charging the boys, a soldier turned to the camera crews and asked casually, "You guys have enough light? Can we get started?" The cameramen nodded, and the confrontation began.

It was a classic television chase scene. The troops hurled the tear gas grenades and ran toward the boys behind the billows of smoke, firing their rubber bullets as the stone-throwers disappeared into side alleys.

Four months later, one evening in mid-May, I filed a story on the latest leaflet published by the clandestine leadership of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. A few minutes after the story reached the news desk, my editor told me it had been censored; not even the existence of the leaflet could be mentioned in the newspaper. It was the first time the military censor had banned publication in the Israeli press of such leaflets, containing instructions for protests and violent demonstrations. "We're doing everything we can to suppress these leaflets," the duty censor told me over the phone, "so we're supposed to allow them to be reproduced in the mass media?"

The two incidents illustrate the transformation that has taken place in the attitude of the Israeli government and public toward media coverage of the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Tolerance and openness have been replaced by hostility and increasing press restrictions, as local and foreign journalists have dug up unsavory details of the ugly war between Israeli troops and Palestinians. The Palestinian uprising is

seen by the government as a serious threat to state security, and it has decided that tough measures are needed to combat it, including limits on press freedom.

For reporters who, like myself, cover the West Bank, the changes have been incremental, seeming small when they happen, but significant when viewed in retrospect. We received an early hint of what was to come in the first week of the uprising (the second week in December), when a colleague and I reported on the vandalizing by border police of homes in the Balata refugee camp near the city of Nablus. In a subsequent briefing on the incident, a senior officer told us that the border police commander at the camp had been relieved of his duties. This piece of news was banned by the censor, apparently because it implied official admission of guilt. Similarly, the censor deleted from my copy a quote from the same senior officer, who had admitted that every killing of a Palestinian by the army "is a failure on our part." This censorship appeared to go well beyond strict security concerns.

On April 4, I filed a story about a Hebrew-language leaflet distributed by Arabs to Israeli soldiers in the West Bank, calling on them to desert. My paper ran the story without submitting it to the censor, but it was deleted by the censor from other papers, which had followed the rules, on the ground that publishing the contents of the leaflet could

undermine the morale of the troops. *The Jerusalem Post* was reprimanded.

Later that month, a story reporting the de facto resignation of the Israeli-appointed Arab mayor of Nablus was censored. The reason was a conviction on the part of the authorities that any news about the departure of Palestinian civil servants could encourage others to step down, threatening the rupture of an important link in the Israeli military government in the territories. The definition of "security reasons" — the only ones for which the military censor may delete news copy — seemed to be expanding as the uprising wore on.

Access to areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was also being restricted. Declaration of "closed military zones" — i.e., closed to journalists — began in the Gaza Strip in early January and peaked on March 30, "Land Day," when Arabs in Israel and the occupied territories observed a day of protest against government expropriation of Arab lands. The entire West Bank and Gaza Strip were closed to journalists for the last four days of March, on the ground that the presence of television cameras and reporters encouraged rioting. Despite the absence of the media, Land Day proved to be the bloodiest day of the uprising: fourteen Palestinians were killed and more than one hundred wounded.

The closing off of certain areas has

**Press Keep Out:** With roadblocks like this one at Ramallah, the Israeli army has tried to keep reporters away from trouble spots in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



Joel Greenberg covers the West Bank for The Jerusalem Post.

been taken as a challenge by local and foreign reporters, who have made it their business to get into precisely the zones from which they have been barred by the army. A basic tactic is to remove the "press" signs that Israeli reporters have been displaying on their windshields to deter Palestinian youths prepared to hurl rocks at any car with Israeli license plates. While removing the "press" sign makes you vulnerable to the rock-throwing, it gets you by the army checkpoints set up to keep reporters out.

A more difficult, but more interesting, task is to get into isolated villages that have been physically sealed off by the army as punishment for rioting. Those villages are surrounded by military road-blocks and ramparts of earth have been heaped by army bulldozers on all access roads. No one may enter or leave.

In mid-March, a colleague from the daily *Ha'aretz* and I paid separate visits to the town of Kabatiya in the northern West Bank, which had been under such an army siege for over a month, after its residents had lynched a local man thought to be collaborating with the Israelis. My colleague got in by riding a tractor that was smuggling in food supplies from a neighboring village. I entered by walking for half an hour along mountain paths leading from that same village.

Our stories ran on March 27 and 30. They showed that the people of Kabatiya were not only physically cut off from the outside world; the army had also cut off their electricity, water, and cooking-fuel supplies. The stories described a town that had gone back a century in time, its residents collecting wood for cooking fires, drawing water from wells, and hunting animals in neighboring hills. The news brought a parliamentary question to the defense minister in the Knesset, and several days later the siege was lifted.

The need to get out into the field and see things for yourself has been made more urgent by the drying up of traditional sources of information for Israeli and foreign journalists. The official army spokesman, once a steady and largely reliable source of information on incidents in the occupied territories, has lost much of his credibility in the eyes of Israeli reporters. Since the start of the

uprising, army reports have become increasingly incomplete and laconic; sometimes they are downright wrong. Often we have heard of incidents first from Palestinian sources, not from the army. This has happened even when Palestinians have been killed or wounded in clashes with troops. Many incidents reported by Palestinians or witnessed by reporters are simply not mentioned by the army spokesman.

A classic case of this was the incident on February 5 in which Israeli soldiers using a bulldozer buried alive four Palestinian youths after a violent demonstration. The youths were rescued and they told their tale, which first appeared three days later in the daily *Hadashot*. At first the army discounted the report as untrue. Only after persistent questioning and publication of a follow-up investigation in the Jerusalem local weekly *Kol Ha'ir* was the incident officially confirmed; the soldiers were later court-martialed. Incidents such as this appear to be a result both of a deliberate attempt by the army to play down the extent of the unrest and of an inability of the army's information network to cope with the volume of reports streaming in from the field.

At the same time, Palestinian news sources are being restricted. Palestinians living at the scenes of major incidents are a vital source of information, whose reports can be compared with the army's. However, the barring of journalists from trouble spots has made it increasingly difficult to get their version of events.

On occasions when reporters have managed to slip into such areas, important details have emerged. On February 23 a Palestinian girl was shot and killed in the West Bank village of Baka Sharikiya. The army reported the death but said its circumstances were being investigated. I managed to slip through a military cordon into the village and heard an eyewitness report that the girl was killed by a Jewish settler. Earlier that month, reporters evaded army road-blocks to get into the village of Kaddum, where they heard accounts of another settler shooting, whose details had not been revealed by the army.

There have also been attempts to block off secondary Palestinian news sources. On March 30 the Palestine

Alexandra Avakian/Woodfin Camp



**Blaming the media:** An ABC crew, on the scene in Bethlehem when an Israeli army reservist was fatally shot, was accused in the Israeli parliament of doing nothing to help the soldier as he lay bleeding to death. In fact, the ABC crew, using a mobile phone in its car, had called for medical assistance.

Press Service in East Jerusalem, which furnished foreign and local reporters with news tips provided by its many stringers in the occupied territories, was ordered closed for six months. The Israeli government press office, where most reporters have mailboxes, has banned distribution in these boxes of material from Palestinian institutions and organizations, arguing that a government office need not serve as a conduit for hostile Palestinian propaganda.

What has emerged from all this is a plain reality, often hidden here under the guise of "liaison" and "cooperation" between military and government officials and the press: when the chips are down, the interests of the government and the media are in conflict. Faced with what they see as a state of emergency, the authorities will have few qualms about limiting freedom of the press, notwithstanding Israel's reputation as an open society.

The developing conflict between the authorities and the press has emerged on all levels, from the offices of the Defense Ministry and army spokesmen in Tel Aviv to the military roadblocks in the

West Bank. In the political realm, it has emerged in calls by right-wing politicians for banning the media from the territories altogether. It has also been reflected in growing expressions of anti-press sentiment by broad sectors of the Israeli public.

Several recent incidents illustrate this increasing estrangement between Israelis and their media, and the danger faced by journalists here of being sucked into a conflict they are trying to cover dispassionately.

On the official level, journalists were recently warned by unnamed "defense sources" quoted in the local press that "measures" would be taken against them if they were responsible for "false" reports of events in the territories. One foreign radio reporter was called in by the army spokesman and ordered to apologize and to retract a report the spokesman had publicly denied.

There were more sinister developments in the political sphere. On Sunday, March 20, an Israeli army reservist was gunned down while on duty in Bethlehem. As he lay bleeding, he was photographed by an ABC television crew and by news photographers who were present in force in expectation of protest marches following church services. The shooting, the first killing of an Israeli since the uprising began, caused widespread feelings of outrage, which a right-wing member of parliament, Geula Cohen of the Tehiya party, tried to turn against the media. She charged that the newsmen may have had prior knowledge of the attack and had done nothing to prevent it, or even to provide assistance to the wounded soldier.

As it happened, the television crew had used a mobile phone in its car to call for help, but later publication of this fact did little to dispel the dark suspicions aroused by Cohen. She had, in effect, made the media accomplices in a killing.

The growing public animosity toward the media has been evident in the behavior of soldiers in the territories in their dealings with reporters. There have been numerous complaints by journalists of physical attacks on them by soldiers anxious to get them away from scenes of unrest. I was once roughly pushed back into my car when I got out to get a closer look at the bloodied face of a

Palestinian youth who had been beaten. Verbal abuse from soldiers is also common. The reactions of the soldiers, who represent a cross section of Israeli society, seem to reflect a widespread belief that the press is concentrating on the negative, smearing the soldiers who are carrying out a tough job instead of giving them the backing they deserve. The me-



Irrefutable evidence:

*This CBS shot of soldiers beating a Palestine prisoner was shown on Israel TV. CBS won points with shocked Israelis by turning over its footage to the army, which identified and arrested the soldiers involved.*

dia — particularly television — are, in addition, seen as provocateurs, troublemakers whose very presence can touch off a demonstration.

While Israeli journalists are increasingly perceived as enemies by other Israelis, they are often seen by Palestinians as being too closely identified with the Israeli authorities. After the lynching at Kabatiya, filmed by a Cable News Network crew, Israeli security authorities confiscated the film in order to use it to identify participants in the killing. CNN decided not to take legal action to recover the film after being told that, even if it were recovered, it could not be broadcast. Film taken from still photographers working for Reuters, *Time*, and *Newsweek* was also confiscated after the killing of the soldier in Bethlehem. These three news organizations regained their film after petitioning Israel's High Court of Justice. Concern was growing among journalists, who feared that use of their material for security purposes would endanger their lives, because they would be perceived by Palestinians as Israeli agents.

It is not uncommon for Palestinians to

suspect that Israeli reporters asking them probing questions are in fact security agents. I have been asked several times by Palestinian youths to produce a press card. During a riot in Nablus, youths almost turned on a colleague of mine when they saw him taking notes in Hebrew.

A way out of this maze of partisanship has been to demonstrate publicly that one's journalistic work is not serving sinister aims, but can in fact be a constructive force. At least twice since the uprising began, it seems to me, this has been done successfully.

On April 6 a group of Israeli children from a West Bank settlement was attacked by a stone-throwing crowd in the Palestinian village of Beita. During the clash a Jewish girl was accidentally killed when the children's armed guard opened fire. Other children were hurt by stones and bullet fragments.

An NBC television crew, which arrived first on the scene, helped to rescue some of the children and called for help. But it did more than that. Its members appeared on Israel Television and told the Israeli public what they had done. This contributed significantly to improving the public's image of the media.

A second case occurred on February 25, when Israel Television broadcast footage shot by a CBS television crew showing Israeli soldiers beating two Palestinian prisoners in Nablus. The broadcast caused a wave of shock in Israel, though some right-wing groups said it proved why the media should be kept out of the territories.

CBS did more than make the film available to Israel TV. It gave it to the army, which used the footage to identify the soldiers involved, who were then arrested. Israel's top West Bank commander ordered his entire staff of senior officers to view the film, and declared that "the army will not be a mob."

On these two occasions, journalists proved to Israelis that, beyond the daily public service of digging out the news, they were willing to become constructive actors in the scenes they were documenting. Such contributions, properly publicized, may help journalists avoid accusations of partisanship in the highly charged atmosphere of the Palestinian uprising. ■

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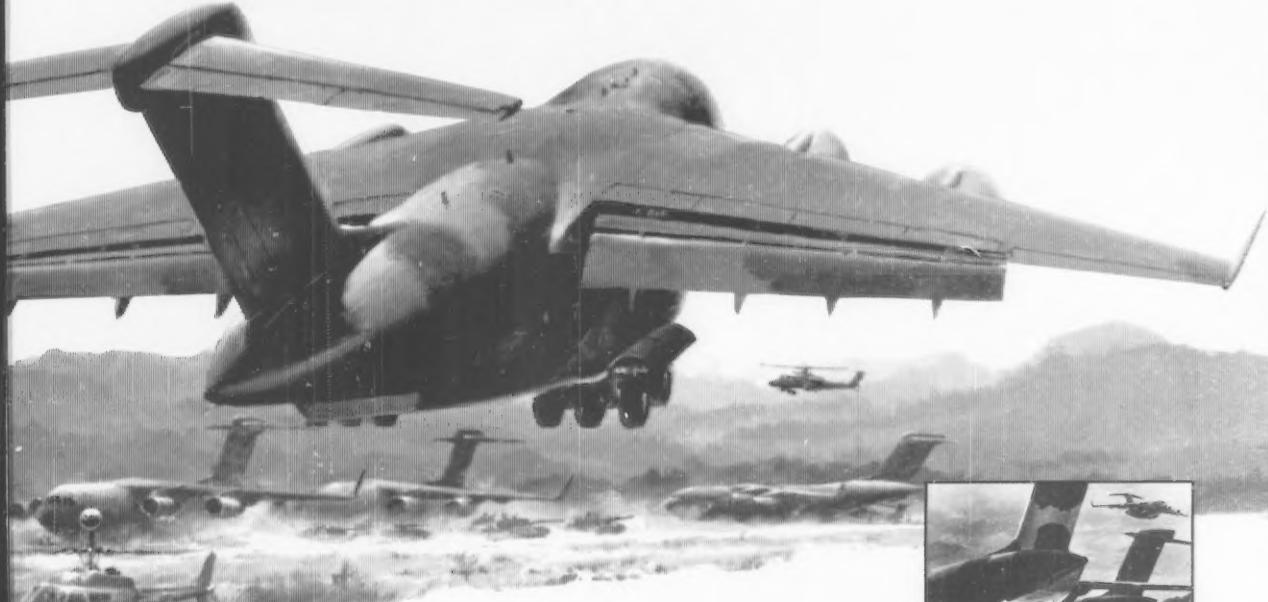
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# Hard times at the *Sun-Times*

Two years after Murdoch pulled out, the scrappy tabloid is still scrambling to regain lost stature

by JON ZIOMEK and PAUL McGRATH

After media magnate Rupert Murdoch sold the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 1986 to his Chicago publisher, Robert Page, Page wasted no time in trying to move himself out of his former boss's long shadow. He hired a respected new editor, toned down the paper's Murdochian graphics, and pledged to provide a more serious product to a town that takes its journalism seriously.

Now, two years later, editorial layoffs, newsroom cutbacks, and a revolving door in the front office have created an air of tension and have lowered morale at the paper that once called itself Chicago's Bright One.

Across Michigan Avenue sits an ocean liner of a newspaper, the *Chicago Tribune*, flagship of a \$2 billion media company that owns, among other things, paper mills, the New York *Daily News*, radio and television stations, and the Chicago Cubs. The *Trib* steams along with about three times the advertising revenue of the *Sun-Times*, a big circulation in the wealthy and growing suburbs, famous columnists, buckets of prizes, and an air of serene confidence that sometimes manifests itself in an almost somnolent approach to city news coverage.

The tabloid *Sun-Times* has never been sleepy. Known for its aggressive local coverage, the *Sun-Times* is like a highly maneuverable tugboat, scooting alongside the *Tribune* and finding local stories that the big ship missed. Recently, however, the spunky tugboat has been sailing in turbulent water, with dissension in its crew while the captain looks for enough cash to help pay for the boat. Five of the newspaper's top editors and three columnists have either jumped ship or been jettisoned in the last fifteen months.

Jon Ziomek and Paul McGrath are former Chicago newspaper reporters. Ziomek worked at the Sun-Times, McGrath at both the Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune. They now teach at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

And a rough round of Newspaper Guild contract negotiations is now under way.

And those are just the newsroom issues. On the business side, the company has faced soaring newsprint prices this year. Then, too, sooner or later it's going to have to deal with the problem of its aging presses ("They're not state of the art," admits Page. "They're like well-maintained DC-3s") either by buying new equipment or jobbing out the printing. A circulation war was launched by the *Tribune* this year when it began buying up or signing exclusive contracts with many independent news distributors in the metropolitan area. That has already made it harder for the *Sun-Times* to get itself delivered in some areas, especially the suburbs. And the *Sun-Times* must battle for advertising with the paper that in recent years has succeeded in luring away many of the *Sun-Times*'s upscale readers.

"Four and a half years ago the *Tribune* was scared," recalls *Tribune* columnist Mike Royko. "The upper demographics were going for the *Sun-Times*." When Marshall Field owned the paper in the 1960s and 1970s, the *Sun-Times* was a well-regarded "serious" tabloid that was making inroads into *Tribune* territory. The *Tribune*'s present editor, James Squires, admits that his paper's own readership surveys showed that the *Sun-Times* was the local

paper with a youthful, liberal image of relevance. During the 1970s, the scrappy tabloid won as many Pulitzer Prizes (five) as the *Tribune*.

Then, in 1984, Murdoch bought the paper — a move that stunned the city. Royko, then a *Sun-Times* columnist and a fishing buddy of Field, was so angered by the sale that he has not spoken to Field since. The paper never became another *New York Post*, but lurid headlines turned off many readers, especially affluent suburbanites. Staff morale slumped, in part because of the defection to the *Tribune* of Royko and several other staff members.

Morale rose when Page took over. Page — who had put together an investment team that paid Murdoch \$145 million, nearly double Murdoch's purchase price — immediately announced that Murdoch's promotional games were over ("Wingo is dead," he said), that the paper had been restored to local ownership (he meant himself, although most of the money in the leveraged buyout came from loans provided by Citicorp in New York), and that the paper would take on a quieter, more respectable appearance.

To back up his promises, he hired Matthew Storin, the respected former managing editor of *The Boston Globe*, against which Murdoch's *Boston Herald* competes. Page told him this: "I've got



Finding a niche:  
Publisher Robert Page says, "We're determined to be Chicago's best Chicago newspaper."

## THE \$10,000 EUGENE C. PULLIAM

# EDITORIAL WRITING FELLOWSHIP

The Sigma Delta Chi Foundation is accepting applications for the Eugene C. Pulliam Fellowship, a grant of \$10,000 awarded annually to an outstanding editorial writer to help broaden his or her journalistic horizons and knowledge of the world through travel or study. Applicants must have at least three years' editorial writing experience.

The 1988 Pulliam Fellow may use the award to cover the costs of study in any field at a university or college, or to cover the costs of travel in the United States or abroad, or to cover the costs of a combination of study and travel.

The time spent on travel is determined by the Fellow, in consultation with his or her newspaper. A Fellow is not expected to take an extended leave of absence. And, too, Fellows are encouraged to write editorials for their papers while traveling.

A panel of distinguished, veteran journalists will select the recipient of the Fellowship, based on an analysis of the applicant's writing skills, of the educational value of past editorials, and of a prospectus on how the study or travel the applicant proposes would help the writer better serve the reading public.

Applications for the Fellowship must include *each* of the following: (1) a one-page personal biography; (2) a summary of professional experience; (3) five samples of editorials [a series may count as one editorial]; (4) a prospectus on how the Fellowship will be served and how it will make the applicant a better editorial writer; and (5) a letter of endorsement from the applicant's employer. Entries should be sent to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, which sponsors the Fellowship, at the address below.

The deadline for applications is **September 6, 1988**.

The Fellowship honors the memory of Eugene C. Pulliam (1889-1975), who was publisher of *The Arizona Republic*, *The Phoenix Gazette*, *The Indianapolis Star*, *The Indianapolis News*, *The Muncie Star*, *The Muncie Evening Press*, and the *Vincennes Sun-Commercial*. Pulliam was one of ten DePauw University students who in 1909 founded Sigma Delta Chi, now The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi. Today, more than 20,000 journalists are members of SPJ,SDX.

The Fellowship was made possible through a grant from Mrs. Eugene C. Pulliam.

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only one instruction for you — make this a great newspaper," Storin recalls. A wonderful mandate indeed!

Nine months after hiring Storin, seeing that circulation had failed to rise, Page began planning to reinstitute promotional games and to cut the staff. The newshole shrank. Storin resigned last summer; his leaving was the first in a series of voluntary and involuntary departures. A project to develop a Sunday magazine was killed.

Page's cost-cutting helped the paper make a healthy pretax profit in his first fiscal year as publisher — approximately \$20 million. However, that went back to Citicorp. Of the 1988 profits, rumored to be not as big because of rising costs and shakier advertising, he says only that "we're right on the money."

Page's abrupt actions have irked many employees. Last summer, a group of nearly 100 Newspaper Guild members and their families picketed at their own company picnic. But the economies continued: last fall nearly a dozen senior reporters were coaxed into taking early retirement. Now, the paper has no gutsy local columnist to replace Royko and no full-time state government reporter in Chicago, where much state business is transacted. The Springfield (state capital) bureau-chief slot is empty and the weekday features section usually consists only of entertainment columns, reviews, and listings. Political reporting is thinner, most notably because of the transfer of popular political editor Basil Talbott to the newspaper's Washington bureau. Total editorial employees now number around 300. That's more than the newspaper had ten years ago before the *Sun-Times* merged with Field's failing *Daily News*, but the heavy-handed maneuvers have heightened newsroom tension.

Things are tense on the executive level, too. Page's wings were clipped last winter when two assistants left and were not replaced; at about the same time, the company's director of labor relations quit. Chairman of the board Leonard Shaykin, a former Chicagoan who watches the paper from his investment firm in New York, started flying to Chicago weekly.

While cutting back on the newsroom budget, Page is spending what little money he has on trying to develop a

personality for the paper — raiding the *Tribune* for several staff members, including brassy gossip columnist Michael Sneed, and sponsoring museum exhibits and other civic events. Page himself has a high profile in Chicago, serving on various local philanthropic boards.

But the results of the personality campaign are uneven, at best. Some staff members were embarrassed last spring by an overplayed series of articles based on the love letters of serial killer John Wayne Gacy. And when Page and his wife, Nancy Merrill Page, took a trip to India last year, readers of the *Sun-Times* read about it in articles written by Mrs. Page, a TV journalist. In one article, she fantasized about a conversation between Mother Teresa and God, in which God told Mother Teresa to let Mrs. Page interview her (she did).

**E**ach newspaper seems to be going its own way now: the *Sun-Times*, with its shrinking resources, trying for its former success as the paper of the city's streets; the *Tribune* apparently pursuing grander, regional aspirations. "The two papers aren't as competitive as they used to be," says Lois Wille, the *Tribune*'s editorial page editor, who used to hold that same job at the *Sun-Times*.

"We've tried to establish the idea that the *Tribune* is going to present a consistent picture of the world from local to international, and edit page one in terms of the significance of the news," says the *Tribune*'s executive editor, Jack Fuller. "We cover the whole metropolitan area," he adds. "That's where the population growth is." In response to criticism from *Sun-Times* executive editor Kenneth D. Towers that the *Trib* is "dull" and "doesn't seem to care much about Chicago," *Tribune* editors point out that the paper won a 1988 Pulitzer Prize for an investigation of city hall corruption. "The *Sun-Times* doesn't do a better job of local reporting," Royko insists. "They just display it better."

With its vast resources, the *Tribune* is, of course, unmatched when it comes to freeing teams of reporters for weeks or even months to produce such "systemic studies" as the one for which the paper was awarded a Pulitzer. But turning out such studies is not the same as having street smarts, and *Sun-Times*

editors and reporters argue that there are still plenty of people who want city news played up. Towers can rattle off numerous local stories on which he believes the *Sun-Times* outreported its larger rival, and others point to the contrasting ways in which the two papers covered the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners' decision this past April to hold a special mayoral election next year. The *Sun-Times* splashed the story all over the front page. The *Tribune* relegated it to the paper's hefty Chicagoland section, a second news section that follows the first, which is almost exclusively devoted to national and international news. There were only two Chicago stories in the entire front section of the *Trib* that day, one of them about a wildflower exhibit in downtown Grant Park.

"We have no national pretensions," Page says. "We have no regional midwest pretensions. We're determined to be Chicago's best *Chicago* newspaper."

According to the March 1988 ABC figures, the *Sun-Times*'s total paid circulation over the preceding twelve months had gone up about 2 percent, to 625,035. But the *Tribune*'s circulation — without giveaway games — had increased by the same percentage, to 774,045, so the increase may reflect the general newsworthiness of the period, with the presidential primary season and the death last fall of Chicago's mayor, Harold Washington. Of interest is the fact that circulation of the northwest suburban daily *Herald* and the southwest-side and suburban *Economist* went up by even bigger margins: 6.6 percent and 28.7 percent, respectively. While each has only a small fraction of the circulation of the downtown dailies, both papers now carry national as well as local news and may be luring potential readers away from the downtown metros. Squires says that he is more worried about the two suburban dailies than he is about the *Sun-Times*.

The *Sun-Times* isn't likely to fold — but it may continue to struggle. And what would that mean? It would mean that what used to be considered the zaniest newspaper town in the United States may become like Miami or Los Angeles or Milwaukee — a city with one dominant paper, one struggling competitor, and a pack of suburban dailies nipping away at the heels of both.

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Now hard earned equality is being contracted away. As government turns to "contracting out," minorities are increasingly finding themselves jobless. In one city department in Houston, 17 of 18 employees fired because of privatization were Black. Over the last two and half years a variety of Houston public jobs have been turned over to private companies. Some 125 workers have lost their jobs as private companies cut employees. At least 80% were Hispanic or Black.

Los Angeles County

officials have found that after several services were contracted out, 90% of those laid off were Black, Hispanic or Asians.

Across the country minority and women workers who first found employment equality with government are losing their jobs and benefits because of contracting out.

Proponents of contracting out are always saying that privatization costs less and provides better services to the public.

But the truth is contracting out usually ends up costing more, not less.

After all, private companies are in the business of making a profit and don't have to answer to taxpayers.

Going private frequently means lower quality service as companies cut corners to make money. They hire more inexperienced, often

less motivated employees. And there is the age-old problem of corruption.

So, what many officials are finding out is that while contracting out may look good on paper, it doesn't work in practice.

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# ON THE JOB

## How to make it on your own as a foreign correspondent

by DAN BAUM

For reporters with ambitions to work overseas, the job market is dismal. The few papers that have overseas staff generally use those posts as rewards for city- and national-desk veterans. Often the first step on the road to a paper's Moscow bureau is joining the night city desk and then badgering the foreign editor for a decade or so.

"Just go," several foreign editors wrote me, as they returned my résumé and clips. "Find a place, set yourself up, and start reporting." It's a big world, they said, and even the biggest papers can't afford to have their own correspondents everywhere.

But I'd known people who had done what the editors suggested. Back in the days when I had a staff job in Singapore on *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, the life of a free-lancer seemed miserable. From where I sat, with my expense account and weekly paycheck, stringers seemed always to be scrambling for new clients, chasing obscure facts for obscure journals, and rewording stories to sell them again and again. They lived like refugees, and they never seemed to be off duty. At the advanced age of thirty-one, with a thirty-three-year-old wife and partner, that kind of hand-to-mouth existence didn't appeal.

And yet here we are free-lancing in southern Africa. We write regularly for four big papers and less often for a news-magazine and a couple of radio news agencies. We live well, with a house in the suburbs of Harare, Zimbabwe, a

Dan Baum has worked for *The Wall Street Journal* in Boston and New York. He has also worked for *The Atlanta Constitution*, as has his wife and free-lance partner, Margaret L. Knox.

downtown office, and a secondhand Peugeot. In our first year we've paid off our air tickets and start-up costs and now work fewer evenings and weekends than we did when we held regular jobs.

The line we walked to get here fell somewhere between having a staff job and "just going." It began with the realization that a free-lance news bureau is a business. Like a hardware store, a news bureau has to move enough merchandise — in this case, stories — at a high enough price to cover costs and earn a reasonable profit. A mercenary approach to the pursuit of truth, perhaps, but for a foreign reporter to go broke and go home doesn't advance the cause of truth much, either.

Our first task was to select a venue. We perused the world atlas as one would a dinner menu, looking for a place that wasn't already overrun with American reporters but where news was breaking. That ruled out places like Managua and Oslo. South Africa attracted us, being such an important story, but most papers either have a reporter of their own there or someone in place to string for them.

Across the borders from South Africa and Namibia, however, lie the frontline states of Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Tanzania. We'd read about South Africa's ham-fisted efforts to hold its neighbors as economic and political hostages: its sponsorship of guerrilla armies in Mozambique and Angola, its sabotage of regional transportation routes other than its own, even direct military attacks. It seemed to us that as South Africa grew more turbulent, and the world's disgust with apartheid mounted, Pretoria would be increasingly motivated to destabilize its neighbors. News would be breaking in the frontline states.

Yet, amazingly, only one American paper, the *Detroit Free Press*, has a bureau in Harare, the economic and politi-

cal epicenter of the frontline countries. And weeks of research revealed that only *The New York Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor* had regular stringers there. Most papers keep their black-Africa reporters or stringers in Nairobi, 1,300 miles away.

We started drumming up business a full eight months before we boarded the plane. Most of the sixty-odd foreign editors we canvassed said they receive a lot of unsolicited copy from people they have never heard of — copy that is rarely used. By the time we touched down in Zimbabwe, we wanted the editors to feel as though they had their own staff there.

**S**o for eight months we each worked two jobs. Sometimes we almost didn't have time to go to our paying jobs, because setting up "The Africa Bureau," as we presumptuously called it, was so consuming. The sales package we prepared could have sold Florida real estate. A crisp blue folder held my clips and résumé on one side, and my wife's clips and résumé — printed in the same typeface as mine and on the same paper — on the other. It cost \$330 to have sixty such packages printed and a personalized letter computer-generated for each. Postage claimed another \$120. Half a year before we even had visas, the Africa project had eaten up \$600 of our meager resources, and the phone bill hadn't yet arrived.

The bill was to grow larger. We had to take several comp days to telephone the sixty editors on our list, asking each a set of questions from a form we had drawn up. What kinds of stories do you want? How long? How often? What are your computer codes and telex numbers? What do you pay? Is that immediately or at the end of the month? Do you pay a kill fee?

Then came questions of exclusivity. The United States is so huge that freelancers can file the same story to many



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papers without conflict. (Our British colleagues in Harare mumble enviously as they rewrite their stories for Britain's closely packed papers.) *The Kansas City Star*, for example, doesn't care if a story it has bought runs word for word in *The Atlanta Constitution*. "If I wanted exclusivity I'd expect to pay for it," managing editor David Zeeck told us.

But *The Dallas Morning News* doesn't want to find in the *Dallas Times Herald* a story for which it paid \$150. And, as we learned, just being careful to sell a particular story to one paper in each market isn't good enough.

When sixteen members of a pentecostal mission in southern Zimbabwe were massacred last November we filed a news story to the *San Francisco Examiner* and a rewritten version to *The Washington Post*. Sounds good, but the *Post* put the story on its Washington Post - L.A. Times wire, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* picked it up. Both the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* had virtually the same story with the same by-lines on the same day, only the *Chronicle* got it free and the *Examiner*

— one of our best clients — had to pay for it. We've since altered our system to keep this from happening again.

Trying to anticipate such problems in our discussions with potential clients not only helped us organize ourselves; it also, we think, helped sell us to the editors. Many free-lancers are apparently the kind of disorganized and itinerant word-merchants I'd known in Singapore. Our display of almost pathological preparation was quite a comforting change, editors told us.

**F**ree-lancing has its dark side. Unless we can wheedle a little expense money out of a client or two, we have to pay for all our own travel. And covering a region demands a lot of expensive time on the road. Like it or not, we also "compete" with events elsewhere. Everybody wanted a story about a nationwide currency re-issue in Uganda until the *U.S.S. Stark* was hit by an Iraqi missile. At that point, Uganda might as well have been on the moon. A presidential campaign in the U.S. doesn't leave a very big foreign

newshole, either.

Another difficulty is that we have to spend about a third of our time just wrestling with the logistics of free-lancing — booking collect calls at all hours of the night to pitch stories, struggling with the technology each time we file, rewriting leads, billing. . . It sometimes makes us yearn for the days when all we had to worry about was getting the story and writing it well.

But the rewards are huge. Right now, I'm pounding this particular free-lance piece into my Tandy aboard a freighter off the coast of Mozambique, en route from Inhambane to Maputo with a load of cashews. A hot summer squall just left the deck gleaming, and the Filipino cook is preparing for dinner an angelfish the size of a manhole cover. After four days upcountry reporting on war and recovery, this is the cheapest way back to the capital.

It certainly isn't the quickest way back, and we are manifestly out of touch. But my editor says that's okay. She's up in the wheelhouse, learning how to navigate. ■

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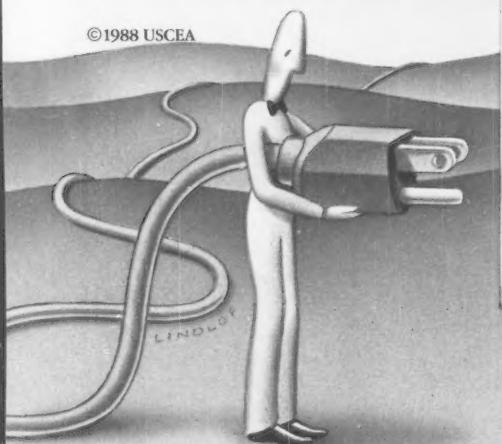
Nuclear energy is already America's second largest source of electricity after coal. By reducing the use of foreign oil to make electricity, nuclear plants have saved America \$105 billion in foreign oil payments since 1973. Nuclear plants have also helped cut consumer electric bills by over \$60 billion.

Nuclear energy reduces America's dependence on foreign oil, not only at electric power plants, but wherever electricity replaces oil. It supplies a large part of the electricity that our economy needs to prosper.

If you'd like more information on making America more energy independent, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66103, Dept. SH16, Washington, D.C. 20035.

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# BOOKS

## Losing it

### Prime Times, Bad Times

by Ed Joyce

Doubleday. 561 pp. \$19.95

### Who Killed CBS?

by Peter J. Boyer

Random House. 362 pp. \$18.95

by JERRY M. LANDAY

Two additions to the CBS bookshelf chronicle the ravages that corporate new-think has wrought on the house that invented broadcast journalism — bringing changes that advance neither the craft nor the society it is supposed to serve. Both authors deal with what happened when the nonpareil of network news found itself caught in a war between the forces of Murrow and mammon. *New York Times* reporter Boyer is the observer-historian, former CBS News president Joyce a principal player who offers his inside version of events, with titillating behind-the-scenes detail derived from copious memos-to-file.

In a clash of values and objectives the enshrined status of CBS News in the post-Paley era was undermined by a new breed of big-business operators. Led by a nonbroadcaster from the world of latter-day management, Thomas Wyman, men assumed command who viewed CBS News as a petrified forest, drew distinctions between reporters and broadcasters, and lived by the bottom line, the ratings, and the oracles of stock analysts.

Both books focus on the period from late 1981 to 1986, when Van Gordon Sauter and Joyce ran the news division — the latter initially as Sauter's deputy. They had risen on parallel tracks, newsmen who moved into station management

*Jerry M. Landay was a CBS News correspondent for eight years. He was previously a correspondent at ABC News, and chief foreign correspondent for the Group W stations. He currently produces documentaries for corporations and institutions.*

ment, impressing headquarters en route.

Boyer describes their partition of CBS News into "two classes of people, 'yesterday' people and 'today' people, two ways of thinking, two visions of broadcasting . . . an awful and confusing moment when the insignia of a proud past became a stigma in the new order."

Irreconcilable conflict breeds neuroses, in organizations as in people. And it's in these terms that both authors describe the professional and human consequences. "It's as if a company were having a nervous breakdown," Joyce observes, as he surveys the wreckage of his regime. He quotes himself as telling a colleague: "We try to work inside a system that's basically crazed." Similarly, Boyer writes that "the divided House of Murrow descended into a kind of nervous institutional collapse."

**T**he principal figures in both tales are etched with psychological shadings. There is Sauter, the *enfant terrible* of the new order. A large, bearded hulk of a man of middle-American origins, the demonstrative Sauter is viewed by Boyer as having dedicated his career to escaping from those origins, creating his own persona and altering it, chameleon-like, to fit changing corporate circumstances and client-bosses.

Sauter, rooted in ego and hardly a team player, was ill-suited to run an outfit rooted in collective pride. In serving his own interests, Sauter went with the bosses, not the news division, Boyer writes. "He was . . . rather cynical about CBS News and the people in it." Sauter treated the established CBS News product with anti-elitist disdain. He was moved by feelings, not facts — perceptions, not issues. Pieces should "reach out and touch me," he said. Those that didn't were "Borrr-ring!"

Sauter was adept at exploiting the fascination of the press with the glamour and gossip of the TV business. Joyce

calls him "shamelessly indiscreet" in using newspaper television columns to signal opponents within the organization of impending policy changes, outraging them in the process; he also embarked on a personal public relations campaign to attract favorable attention to himself. It should be pointed out, however, that Joyce, too, was not averse to manipulating the press. He writes of arranging for AP reporter Fred Rothenberg to spend a full day with Dan Rather as Rather went about pretending to be a "hard-charging managing editor." (The AP man produced such an impressive piece on Rather's strong editorial role that the tactic was used again with other reporters and came to be called giving it "the full Rothenberg.")

Both books are dominated by the brooding presence of Dan Rather, a man overcome by the weighty reality of replacing Walter Cronkite, literally reluctant to sit in Cronkite's anchor chair, and anxious to demonstrate his own authority by keeping Cronkite mostly off the air on election night of 1982. Joyce, who would eventually run afoul of the new anchorman, portrays him as "terrified," anxious, and ill at ease in the new assignment. Helping Rather "maintain a steady emotional balance was an ever-present fact of life."

Joyce details how Rather's need for dominance expressed itself in obsessive demands for more resources and manpower for his *Evening News* at the expense of other broadcasts, as well as in the promotion of favored friends and the banning from his nightly line-up of others who had fallen out of favor.

Then there is the figure of Ed Joyce himself, who succeeded to the presidency in 1983 when Sauter was elevated to headquarters. As an author, he presents to his readers the persona of a harried and misunderstood pro under pressure. But he does not seem anxious to help us understand Joyce the person

— his motivations, his conclusions, his feelings. How, for instance, did he feel when he himself became a career casualty? Sauter, after all, joined Rather in a sub-rosa effort to oust Joyce, his erstwhile friend, and took his old job back as president of CBS News; it is clear that there has been rank treachery here. Yet Joyce avoids a personal indictment of Sauter. His most pungent observation about Sauter's character is the recollection of his wife's comment about Sauter's eating habits in a Chinese restaurant: "Van doesn't share."

Joyce acknowledges on the very first page "the chaos many of us helped create." Though he thus assumes some portion of responsibility for the chaos, he fails to suggest ways in which it might have been avoided, resisted, or controlled. He could have made a useful contribution with a thoughtful discussion of preserving one's sanity and integrity in a "breakdown" environment. Alas, he does not.

He does attempt to set his reputation straight. Commenting on an unfriendly magazine article about the turmoil,

Joyce writes of telling a colleague sadly, "Well, I guess I'm identified for all time as someone who wants to move up the corporate ladder on the backs of the poor newsmen." "There aren't enough people who know you, chief," was the reply (at least as Joyce recalls it). "You've been too busy trying to keep the bloody place glued together to get around and do any gladhanding."

To Boyer, not gladhanding was the least of it. He portrays Joyce as a distant man without a constituency, perceived by colleagues as a slavish "little clerk" to the expansive Sauter, a bureaucrat who treated Sauter as a role model, shared his perceptions, and carried out his policies with relish. Boyer writes: "Ed Joyce was there to be Van Sauter's hatchet man." "I enjoyed the frequency with which Van turned to me with instructions to 'handle it,'" Joyce concedes. He writes of telling Sauter: "I love CBS News. There's nothing more important than its reputation." Nevertheless, he was ready to implement managerial mandates and bloody purges that undermined that reputation.

Who killed CBS? Boyer answers his inherently overstated question with a series of indictments: the "crushing" weight of Sauter's ambitions, the "disastrous course" of ceding broad management powers to Rather (including hiring and firing), Joyce's aloof presidential style, and "knaves... phony pietists, and millionaire journalists" of the old school "who used the lamp of Murrow to count their money by."

Then, too, there was Laurence Tisch, who, under the guise of throwing the rascals out, won control of the company and then essentially embraced the original goals of the Wyman-Sauter-Joyce revolution.

Books about CBS News command a narrow, if devoted, audience. The Boyer and Joyce books, in their own ways, however, offer a lesson for American society at large. CBS News used to be a metaphor for an American business attitude that believed in service as a smart way to reach the hearts and pocketbooks of the customers. Good service was good business. Today, sadly, it represents the demise of that enlightened view.

## Vive la différence!

**Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents**  
by Julia Edwards  
Houghton Mifflin. 275 pp. \$17.95

by SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN

The message sent to would-be women foreign correspondents throughout much of this century and the last was unequivocal: stay home. But they didn't. Julia Edwards, who was a foreign correspondent herself in more than 125 countries, recounts these women's experiences with empathy and understanding in her fascinating new book, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents*.

The women we encounter here are ex-

ceptional both in terms of the remarkable courage, wit, and strength of character that they show, and also by virtue of the fact that they are quite literally the exceptions who prove the rule: most women were discouraged, dissuaded, and prevented, by a variety of roadblocks, from choosing this career. Publishers were loath to hire them in the first place. ("We don't have women on the staff," one flatly explained.) In time of war, women who managed to get hired were discouraged from covering the front. ("Generals who thought they could defeat the Germans could see no way of providing latrines for women," Edwards reports.) And those who managed to get to the front often had to fight the hostility and jealousy of male colleagues before they could get on with the work they passionately wanted to do. If their triumphs sometimes make them seem larger than life, their frustrations and disappointments make them human again.

The stories they covered were often ones ignored by their fellow correspond-

Shelley Fisher Fishkin is the author of *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America*, which was published in paperback this spring by Oxford University Press. She is currently a visiting scholar at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford University.



Peggy Hull, wearing the World War I uniform she designed for herself. Hull made history in 1918, when she became the first woman correspondent accredited by the U.S. War Department to cover a war zone.



Photographer Dickey Chapelle was the first American woman combat correspondent to be killed in action. She stepped on a booby-trapped land mine in 1965 while covering a large-scale marine operation in Vietnam.

ents. On the Russian front in World War I, Edwards notes, for example, Rheta Childe Dorr of the *New York Evening Mail* and Bessie Beatty of the *San Francisco Bulletin* were with the Women's Battalion of Death. Before the Russian women left to rout the Germans on their section of the front (a battle in which half of the women were wounded or killed), they had to fend off a different enemy at the barracks — their fellow Russian soldiers, who tried to rape them.

The humiliations and affronts suffered by the correspondents in this book were more subtle and less violent. But, like their Russian sisters, American women foreign correspondents determined to focus on one war found themselves in the middle of another: the battles they continually fought against the double standard often seemed almost as dirty and demoralizing as the battles they covered at the front.

During World War II, for example, the author writes, "The Army set up comfortable press camps for men only and provided daily briefing on the battles and the location of friendly and enemy troops. For transportation, the men were given their own jeeps. Denied briefings, the women went blindly to the front, risking encounters with the enemy. Denied transportation, they had to thumb rides back to the press camp to file their

## BOOKS

stories. Then they had to wait until every last man had sent his story, however insignificant, before they could use the communication facilities."

Despite these trying arrangements, Ann Stringer (United Press) managed to be the first American to greet the Russians when they reached the River Elbe (the best scoop of the war), and Patricia Lockridge (*Woman's Home Companion*) managed to land on Iwo Jima right behind the marines and ahead of the press corps. They were simply maintaining a tradition begun in World War I by Mary Roberts Rinehart of *The Saturday Evening Post* who, when barred from the front, managed to get there anyway, ahead of the men. (Rinehart filed more exclusives, won more readers, and earned more money than most of her male colleagues.)

The impressive group of women we meet in this book took great risks, and great pains, to report history as it happened. There are moments of consummate insight: Sigrid Schultz interviewing

Hitler long before he became chancellor, "reading" him more presciently than any of her colleagues, and sharing her impressions vividly with her readers. There are moments of bravery: photographer Dickey Chapelle being smuggled across French lines in 1957 by Algerian freedom fighters, the first American to cover their side of their struggle for independence.

Yet, as Dorothy Thompson summed it up, the working woman who did her job well learned to expect no applause from the men: "If she is chaste, men will call her cold; if she is brilliant, men will call her 'like a man'; if she is witty, they will suspect her virtue; if she is beautiful, they will try to annex her as an asset to their own position; if she has executive abilities, they will fear her dominance."

The spirit of adventure proverbially associated with foreign correspondents, both male and female, takes on a special poignancy in the case of the women profiled in this book: from the days of Mar-



U.S. Army

As Chicago Daily News correspondent in England in the spring of 1944, Helen Kirkpatrick participated in a rehearsal for D-Day, but she was not allowed to cover the real event.

garet Fuller to modern times, many of these women found a freedom of movement, action, and thought abroad that was not available to them in their own country. All the difficulties they encountered abroad were trivial compared with the constraints that they knew would bind them if they stayed at home.

Despite the positive changes affecting women in the profession during recent years, the double standard dies hard; history itself is a well-defended outpost. As Julia Edwards astutely notes, some of the indignities these women fought in life catch up with them in death, as male historians make their sex life, rather than their stories, the core of the posthumous record — or, as is more frequently the case, write them out of history altogether.

Books like *Women of the World* do much to redress this neglect. Chapters dealing with contemporary correspondents are enriched by interviews conducted by the author; chapters on historical figures synthesize previous historical, autobiographical, and biographical works. While the basic facts

may not be new, the presentation of them is consistently engaging. The book is not without its flaws: Edwards neglects the work of Agnes Smedley in China and Josephine Herbst in Cuba in the 1930s and of Penny Lernoux and Oriana Fallaci in modern times; the book would be more useful if it had footnotes. By and large, however, *Women of the World* is lively, informative, and a pleasure to read. It is a useful contribution to women's studies, American studies, and journalism history.

**A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page**

by Kay Mills

Dodd, Mead. 384 pp. \$19.95

by SONIA JAFFE ROBBINS

**D**o you know how several women got their jobs in newsrooms in Washington in the 1930s? Answer: Eleanor Roosevelt's refusal to let men attend her news conferences forced

*Sonia Jaffe Robbins is a free-lance writer and an assistant professor of journalism at New York University.*

such organizations as the *New York Herald Tribune*, The Associated Press, and the *Chicago Tribune* to hire at least one woman if they wanted to cover the first lady's activities. This nugget is among many enlivening the slow start of *A Place in the News*. Kay Mills's book on newspaperwomen begins more as chronicle than analysis, the first third a potpourri of women's names and women's achievements from colonial times through the 1960s. The names are familiar (Margaret Fuller, Nellie Bly, Josephine Herbst, Dorothy Thompson, and so on) though some of the facts are not as familiar as they ought to be (the National Press Club in Washington, for instance, refused to admit women as members until 1971; at the club's news-making events, women were permitted only to sit in the balcony and observe).

Mills, however, who writes editorials and features for the *Los Angeles Times*, intends to do more than simply track the progress of women from, as the subtitle puts it, "the Women's Pages to the Front Page." She means to show that the entrance of women into the newsroom in

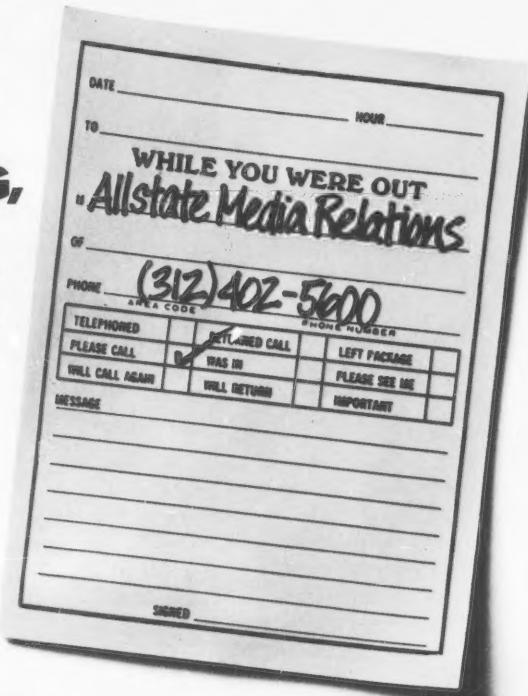
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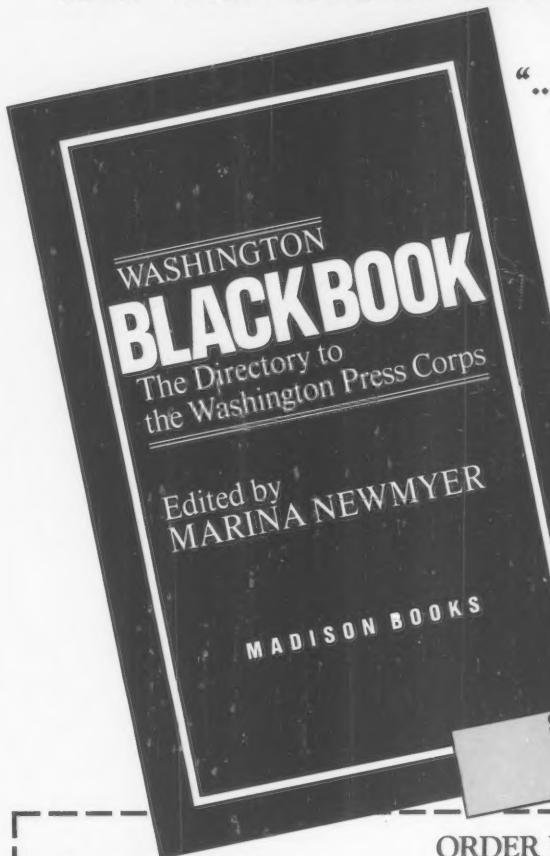
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the '70s and '80s in more than token numbers has not simply added people of the female persuasion but has changed the kinds of stories newspapers run and the play that they are given. Which she does, albeit not in a scholarly, quantifiable way. Mills's book is workaday journalism, based on interviews with 165 women (and ten men). There are few studies showing the effect of women on newspaper coverage (one, in the early '80s, showed that the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, with a woman editor, ran only a few more stories about women than it had run under a male editor; it also showed that stories about women got on the front page more often, and that those stories were tied more to issues than to events). But, relying on anecdotal evidence, Mills persuasively argues that women reporters and editors

see potential stories where men don't.

Why, for instance, have child abuse and sexual abuse become such hot topics in the past few years? It is doubtful that such abuse is more common now than it was thirty years ago, and the press's propensity for fads is only part of the answer. Mills says it's because women reporters see stories about children as news. Elizabeth Rhodes of *The Seattle Times* is a case in point. Noticing a tiny story about a man charged with second-degree murder for killing his girlfriend's small son, she wondered why adults were charged with first-degree murder for killing adults but with second-degree murder or less for killing children, and if convicted often served minimal time in prison. Her research on child abuse deaths in the Seattle area from 1980 to 1985 produced an award-winning series

and a change in the way laws regarding assault on children were enforced in Washington state.

**W**hen women are more than tokens, the traditional idea of what makes news — politics, war, and diplomacy, pegged to a specific event — expands. Among the subjects Mills sees as having come to be worthy of front-page coverage because women are in the newsroom are abortion, rape, battering, health issues like toxic shock syndrome, sexual harassment, day care, and other issues related to women working outside the home. Diana Griego of *The Denver Post*, for example, examined the steadily mounting figures for kidnapped children and found that most of them were not the victims of strangers but were often abducted by noncustodial

## Larry Speaks on the party-seeking press

*The following passage is taken from Speaking Out: The Reagan Presidency from Inside the White House, written by Larry Speakes with Robert Pack and recently published by Charles Scribner's Sons (320 pp., \$19.95):*

Picture the White House at Christmastime: beautiful decorations, a festive atmosphere, and, at the annual Christmas party for the press, an open bar; a lavish buffet featuring shrimp, roast beef, and ham; an open bar; individual photographs of each member of the press and his/her additional guest posing with the president and Mrs. Reagan; an open bar; gifts like Christmas ornaments or ski caps with a White House emblem on them; and an open bar.

Judging by some of the imaginative requests we got for invitations, not being asked to the Christmas party was akin to not being asked to the senior prom.

The annual White House Christmas party actually became the annual White House Christmas parties on my watch; the guest list grew so large that we had to hold the party on two nights. By the time of my last Christmas party, in 1986, we had to invite 500 of our closest friends and their guests each night. Posing for 2,000 pictures with some of their harshest critics was about all the Reagans could handle.

The transition from a one-night Christmas affair to two nights, like almost every other logistical question involving the press, was

not without controversy. No matter which night they were invited, some people were unhappy, and rumors began circulating that we had an A list and a B list. That just wasn't true. After the White House social office said the size of the press corps had grown too large for us to hold our Christmas party on one night, the Reagans agreed to have it on two nights, and we simply went down the list at random, assigning one person to the first night and the next to the second night. The White House reporters made such a big deal about A lists and B lists that I finally started having some fun at their expense. When a reporter would ask me, "Which night is for the A list?" I'd say, "Which night are you coming?" They'd innocently reply, "Tuesday," and I'd catch them with "Oh, I'm so sorry, but Wednesday night is for the A List."

Planning the Christmas party for the press was always a nightmare. My secretary, Connie Gerrard, would start in August, reviewing the press list to see who should be invited. The goal was to limit it to people who actually covered the White House regularly. Each network would have four correspondents, which was okay, but then they would rotate camera crews once a month so that over the course of a year you would have six or eight cameramen from each network. Moreover, the networks obtained White House press credentials for virtually everyone in their Washington bureaus — 150 to

200 per network. And, naturally, everyone from the bureau chief to the file clerks would want to come to our Christmas party.

Hard-working though the members of the media were, they always found time to call us and beg for invitations. Some of the more memorable attempts at making the guest list:

- "My parents are dying, and it would mean a lot if I could bring them to the Christmas party." (That one never worked.)
- "I've been invited every year," from reporters who had *never* been invited. (Didn't they think we kept a record of who we invited?)
- "I've been invited every year," Part Two, from reporters who had been invited regularly while they covered the White House but no longer were on our beat, and in some instances had even been transferred out of town. Our answer: "You'll get an invitation when we see you covering the White House again."
- "My boss won't let me be off on Christmas and New Year's unless you invite him, too." This one, from Candy Crowley of The Associated Press, worked one year. After all, she was a White House regular, and we didn't want to play Scrooge, even if her boss was threatening to.
- "Please, please let us have an invitation for one of our reporters, Kevin Delaney." This request, from ABC, also worked, even though Delaney was their Hong Kong correspondent.

Members of the Fourth Estate would come to the Christmas party looking their best,

parents. Her research led to a series that won a Pulitzer Prize.

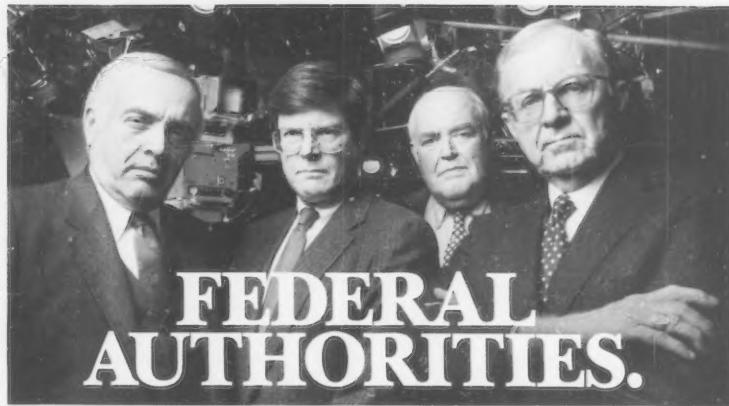
Not only do women reporters cover different kinds of stories; they look at stories differently from the way men do. They ask different questions because, as outsiders, their perspective is different. A male reporter, for example, might well be satisfied to simply report on the number of women appointed to state jobs; would he also think to ask, as the woman editorial writer at the Portland, Maine, *Press Herald* did, "What about day care?"

Still, Mills worries. Women reporters and editors have certainly altered the definition of news, but they have not yet had a similar chance to alter newsroom policies. If and when they reach a critical mass in management, they undoubtedly will have a momentous effect. ■

wearing suits and ties and nice dresses and high heels, which for many was their annual exception to their own dress code. You would expect those who had won the prestigious assignment of covering the president of the United States to dress and conduct themselves accordingly. You would be wrong.

I had a running battle with the press corps over their attire, which had deteriorated tremendously during the four years between the time I left the White House in January 1977 and returned in January 1981. At a White House event there would be a roomful of people in business suits or black tie, and the press would come in grimy T-shirts and jeans, unshaved, and with their hair uncombed. There were really some scruffy types among the regulars.

One of the first things I did was to require the reporters to wear business suits for White House dinners, in or out of the White House, and black tie when there was a black-tie event. But that didn't apply to informal, everyday occasions. The windows in the Reagans' living room overlooked the lawn on the north side of the White House, just outside the West Wing, where the press would gather to see who was going in and out. The reporters would lounge around out there in the sun, sometimes take their shirts off, sometimes have their lunch out there, and just make a mess. Eventually, we built a fence to keep them off the lawn, and we insisted that, when they were on the White House grounds, they wear shirts. ■



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# BRIEFINGS

by GLORIA COOPER



## The devil you say

**Rupert Murdoch and the Demonology of Professional Journalism**, by John J. Pauly. Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research. 1988

Frankenstein, The Alien, Dracula, Godzilla, and the Big Bad Wolf — these are only some of the ways in which the unpopular Rupert Murdoch has been popularly portrayed by the American press. Even *CJR*, in an editorial fit it would just as soon forget, once denounced the acquisitive British press lord as a "force for evil" in the world. But while such unlovely images speak volumes about the man who inspires them, they may also have something to tell us about ourselves. This provocative essay explores the hidden subtext that lies beneath the apocalyptic drama starring Rupert Murdoch as the journalistic Mephistopheles.

Pauly, a professor of communication at the University of Tulsa, begins by considering two of the more obvious factors that might reasonably account for the fear of Murdoch that haunts the press: his economic and his political power. Pauly dismisses them both. For one thing, he points out that Murdoch's holdings include neither monopoly papers nor powerful dailies and that his market strategies typically aim less at advertisers than at street sales to readers whom the dominant dailies have written off. For another, Pauly notes that, far from using his properties to push some passionately held conviction, the opportunistic Murdoch tends to jump on political bandwagons that will boost his circulation; whether Murdoch's readers are politically influenced by the commentary in his papers, or indeed whether they pay any attention to it at all, is difficult to prove — but in any case, Pauly observes, the (presently) conservative direction of his papers is

hardly out of line with that taken by the vast majority of papers in the U.S.

Why, then, does the press perceive Murdoch as a vulgar Prince of Darkness? Pauly believes that, for the answer, one must look beyond both politics and money, into the very soul of professional journalism itself and the myths it has come to live by. One such myth, in the author's view, surrounds the distinction between information and entertainment, a useful illusion that helps journalists defend the social importance of their work and their roles in commercial news organizations that are driven by advertising. The myth — which, not incidentally, also serves to maintain the sense of the superiority of hard news over soft, of print over television, and of journalists over the great unwashed who would rather read about celebrities than about last night's meeting of the sewer commission — is one that Murdoch, heretically, rejects.

A second "myth" that Murdoch's behavior implicitly attacks is that of editorial independence. As Pauly reminds us, Murdoch's cavalier treatment of Harold Evans, editor of the London *Times*, drove home the uncomfortable historical truth that editorial autonomy depends upon the sufferance of the publisher, and exists only until he or she chooses to exercise the rights of ownership. By refusing to take seriously the larger social goals that editorial autonomy implies, the author explains, Murdoch has come to be seen as the enemy of continuing progress toward ever-loftier professional ideals.

And, finally, there is the challenge Murdoch poses to the myth that the big-city dailies speak for — and to — everyone, a myth exposed by the race and class and ethnicity of the readers his papers attract.

Pauly's essay should not be read as an apologia for Murdoch, but he does take pains to note that Murdoch-haters appear to be selective in their criticism — choosing, for example, to overlook all that highly promoted entertainment coverage disguised as consumer information that is regularly packed into such "quality" papers as *The New York Times*, and to undervalue the extraordinary freedom he allowed *The Village Voice*, which during the years he owned it regularly bashed

him in print. Moreover, the author points out, the "quality" papers are not above following Murdoch's lead when profits are involved: just as most of Fleet Street benefited when he broke the British unions' stranglehold, so too would U.S. newspaper conglomerates have probably sought cross-ownership waivers if Murdoch's campaign to keep both the *New York Post* and his New York television station had met with success.

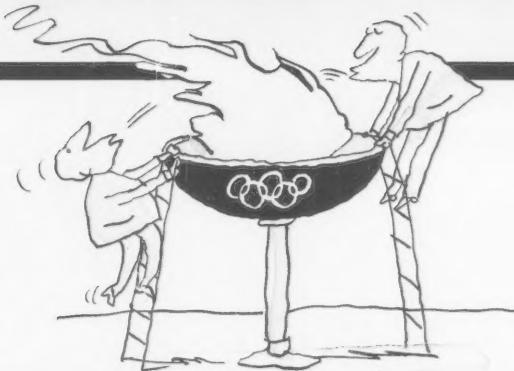
Pauly feels sure that ultimately Murdoch, like the press lords before him, will come to be accepted; it doesn't hurt that he was recently designated by *Forbes* as the forty-seventh richest person in America, and the horns appear to be receding even as Pauly writes. After all, the author concludes caustically, "If the sustained mediocrity of Gannett or the illegal high jinks of the Annenbergs can create distinguished schools and institutes for the promotion of professional journalism, surely there must be hope for Rupert Murdoch as well." The force of such logic is awfully hard to resist.

## No medals for the media

**Three Olympiads: A Comparison of *Pravda* and *The Washington Post***, by Elisabeth Schillinger and Joel Jenswold, *Journalism Quarterly*. Winter 1987

Never very far from the Olympic arena, political rivalries no doubt colored accounts of the Games even in Xenophon's time. Certainly today, in the golden age of objectivity, coverage of the quadrennial media event hardly suggests a want of home-team loyalty on the part of the American press. Indeed, the "almost exclusive diet of disgracefully xenophobic 'news,'" as one UCLA scholar put it in 1980, has often been blamed for the increasing politicization of the Games. Picking up on such criticism, the study at hand compares the performance of two elite newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *Pravda*, each published in its nation's capital and each serving influential readers, in covering three distinctively different Olympiads: the 1976 event in Montreal, in which both U.S. and Soviet teams participated but in which neither served as host; the 1980 Games in Moscow, which were boycotted by the U.S.; and the mirror-image 1984 Los Angeles Games, which were boycotted by the U.S.S.R. The findings are provocative, to say the least.

Fully recognizing such nonpolitical factors as proximity, human interest, and the relative appeal of particular competitions that work against totally balanced and objective cov-



erage, Schillinger and Jenswold (teachers of journalism and political science, respectively, at Oklahoma State University) designed their study, with all the usual tests and codes and controls, to measure both the quantity and quality of items devoted to the Olympics in *Pravda* and the *Post*. As they had hypothesized, the authors found that the political climate surrounding each Olympiad produced significant differences in the number and kinds of items, both within and between the two papers. When the Games moved to Moscow in 1980, for instance, *Pravda*'s coverage increased by some 373 percent over what it had been in Montreal, while the *Post*'s decreased by 55 percent; in Los Angeles, the *Post*'s coverage went up again by 129 percent. More surprisingly, they found that, although the *Post*, as expected, gave a disproportionately high amount of coverage to American and/or Western bloc participants in all three Olympiads, *Pravda* did not display a similar partisanship: in the Moscow Games of 1980, for instance, in which the Soviet team won a record number of medals, Soviet subjects ranked third, in terms of frequency of items, out of the study's possible seven geopolitical categories (i.e., American, Soviet, Western bloc, Eastern bloc, Far East, Developing Nations, and Latin America). Equally significant was the correlation between the handling of Olympic news and observed political patterns. The *Post*, it turned out, though generous in its coverage of Eastern bloc athletes in 1976, overplayed the accomplishments of Western athletes in 1980 and 1984 and underplayed those of top-ranking Eastern bloc teams; *Pravda*, on the other hand, appeared to base its news judgments on athletic achievement rather than on traditional cold-war politics.

Analysis also showed that *Pravda*'s coverage in Montreal was more charitable toward the Americans than was the *Post*'s toward the Soviets; that, in Moscow, *Pravda* all but ignored the American boycott; and that, in Los Angeles, it reported American victories objectively and carried accounts of Western competitors and teams that were

either laudatory or neutral. In contrast, the authors found, the *Post* frequently ridiculed or belittled the Soviets in Montreal; harshly criticized the handling of the Moscow Games; and, in Los Angeles, gave minimal attention to the conspicuous absence of Soviet athletes.

None of the above suggests to the authors that *Pravda*'s coverage was any less politicized than the *Post*'s; if the *Post* was driven by American nationalism, they assert, *Pravda*, in keeping with the principle of "High Idealism" set out in the Soviet *Journalists Handbook*, was busy promoting international communism by stressing collective values, universal peace, and Olympic ideals. The attractiveness of such a message, the authors observe, is not without political utility.

It would be interesting to test these findings against the coverage this summer in Seoul. In the meantime, they will no doubt come in handy the next time someone in Washington impugns the patriotism of the American press.

## Moving on

**Journalists Who Leave the News Media Seem Happier, Find Better Jobs,** by Fred Fedler, Tom Buhr, and Diane Taylor. *Newspaper Research Journal*. Winter 1988

Where have all the journalists gone? And do those who've been transplanted to greener fields secretly pine for the past? Going beyond the well-worn path of previous research showing that journalists all around the country have been leaving their newsrooms in droves — a trend that by 1986 had prompted the Association of Education in Journalism to officially sound an alarm — a team led by a professor at the University of Central Florida set out to learn just where the defectors go and how they view their new jobs. The findings, which are based on interviews conducted in the fall of 1986 with sixty-two former journalists who worked full-time in the U.S. for a year or more in radio, print, or

television news and who now live and work in a five-county area of Central Florida, are likely to prompt still further expressions of professional dismay.

To be sure, the survey confirms a couple of things that commonsensical observation already suggests: that low salaries, bad working conditions, poor management policies, and diminished opportunities are the major factors forcing journalists to leave their chosen field; and that when they leave, they head, by some 45 percent, straight for public relations. (An additional 6 percent of the survey's respondents went into marketing and 6 percent into advertising; others became teachers, free lances, or technical writers.)

Ah, the survey asks, but are they happy? The answer is an unequivocal yes. Seventy-five percent said that their new job was better



for their families and for themselves; in significant percentages, the former journalists reported that, besides more money (on the average, an increase of 74 percent) and better working conditions, the new job gave them more freedom, satisfaction, variety, and security, as well as more opportunity to be creative, to influence decisions, and to make news. (In only one of the twenty comparative categories — "excitement" — did the new job fall short.) Indeed, when asked what could bring them back into journalism, 31 percent mentioned higher salaries and perks, while 19 percent said that nothing whatsoever could entice them to return.

It's clear from the findings of Fedler et al that to halt the march out of the newsroom, what management must do — and quickly — is raise salaries, offer flexible hours, and improve its personnel policies. Fedler doesn't say what journalists should do, but his major conclusion — that, quite apart from better salaries, there are other jobs requiring fewer sacrifices and offering greater rewards — will no doubt make it easier for many to join the parade. And a lot harder for those who stay to sneer about selling out. ■

# UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## Bloody Ireland

### TO THE REVIEW:

How refreshing it is to read your magazine and especially such an article as Jo Thomas's "Bloody Ireland" (CJR, May/June). She is a most perceptive reporter. It is a shame that *The New York Times* is so anglophilic. The American people need to know much more accurately what is going on in the United Kingdom and especially in the six counties the English occupy in Ireland.

My wife and I came to many of the same conclusions as Thomas did during our ten field trips to Ireland, and I reported them in my *Terrorism in Northern Ireland*. But we still gained from reading Thomas's excellent article.

ALFRED MCCLUNG LEE  
Professor emeritus  
City University of New York  
Visiting scholar at Drew University  
Madison, N.J.

## Where MBAs rule

### TO THE REVIEW:

I worked at *The Seattle Times* for nine years before resigning in dismay in 1983. I had watched as a vise closed on enterprise and creativity and ever-meaner efforts were made to transform reporters into serfs, illustrated by one newly hired woman editor's contemptuous comment: "Reporters aren't for thinking. They're for doing what they're told." I second everything Doug Underwood said in "When MBAs Rule the Newsroom" (CJR, March/April).

Once the new breed of editors got in place, they seemed fearful of nothing so much as initiative by reporters. Massive efforts were devoted to stamping it out and achieving a docile, intimidated staff. Now top editors seem amazed that 1) morale is rock bottom and 2) scandals blow up in the community which catch them off guard. An example was the brutal death of an abused three-year-old last year after shocking mishandling of the case by the state. It left the community outraged and the *Times* scrambling to find out what had been going on with child protection laws and policies. Before leaving I had pleaded with editors to let one of us regularly report on the growing mess in the state's system. "We don't want gloom and doom" was the answer I got.

In his December 13, 1987, column headed DOES LOW MORALE MEAN POORER NEWSPAPER? the *Times*'s ombudsman, Frank Wetzel, quoted executive editor Mike Fancher as saying he had never seen such anger in a newsroom, and added: ". . . a recent survey showed that staff members regard senior editors as aloof, ruthless, cold, inhuman, and manipulative. . . . It's not clear whether the low morale translates into a poorer newspaper," Wetzel went on. "But if high morale leads to excellence, presumably the opposite attitude produces something short of that."

I'm wondering if the type of editors who are driving reporters out of newspapering actually listened in their MBA classes. I had thought it pretty well established that successful companies have employees who feel valued and bosses who walk among them and know their concerns. Neither was true at the *Times* when I left.

Mike Fancher said on television recently that he is giving readers what they want to know and ought to know. But in my neighborhood the blue packets holding the now-competing *New York Times* are sprouting on doorsteps like spring flowers. Are his readers as content as he thinks? Maybe they preferred a *Seattle Times* where reporters loved their work. We all once did. Maybe readers can tell the difference.

DALE DOUGLAS MILLS  
Seattle, Wash.

Editors' note: In May of 1982, the year before Mills left the *Times*, she won the Sigma Delta Chi/Society of Professional Journalists lifestyle reporting award for the Pacific Northwest region. In September of that year she won an Allied Daily Newspapers C.B. Blethen Memorial Award for an investigative series on how government agencies are functioning to protect abused children.

### TO THE REVIEW:

As a veteran editor who served under two publishers and a regional vice-president who held MBA degrees, I found that Doug Underwood's article examining the business of journalism hit all the marks save this: if they work at it, strong editors can learn to use the MBAs' abilities to their advantage and to the advantage of their communities.

My experience with the MBAs came when the family ownership of the Carroll County

*Georgian* sold out to Harte-Hanks Communications. In time, thanks to the MBAs from Harte-Hanks and, later, Worrell Enterprises, money fairly rained down on my newsroom — for higher salaries, seminars, trips, better equipment, services, surveys, features, and eventually a new building and plant. To my pleasure, the newsroom was given the financial resources to serve the community more faithfully than it had in decades.

However, as in the well-told tale of the man who dealt with the devil, there was a price to pay. I had to be a slave to my budget and learn the corporate lingo to be able to keep the big dollars flowing to the newsroom. I tried — successfully, I believe — to shield my newspeople from management's uncontrolled boosterism and from the undisguised pro-business stance I experienced at each managers' meeting, so they could continue to be objective in pursuit of the news.

Although agonizingly difficult, the trade-off was worth it. My budget and staff doubled in eight years. We went from weekly to daily. Our news columns became the place for truth, controversy, and excitement, and we even raised a little hell. Sometimes I had to swallow hard and salute, and sometimes I had to fight back, but I kept Santa coming with his bags full of money, budget after budget. I believe I kept faith with my reporters and my readers, too.

The moral of this story is that, rather than falling into despair, editors thrust into the corporate environment should use their God-given street savvy to learn how to cultivate, pressure, and manage their MBA bosses for the good of the readers.

ANDY BOWEN  
Capitol bureau chief  
*The Marietta Daily Journal*  
Marietta, Ga.

### TO THE REVIEW:

Although Doug Underwood's article is a welcome contribution to newspaper criticism, it misses the mark in some respects. During the twenty-four years I served as a national correspondent and editor for *The New York Times*, I observed newsrooms across the country and saw once-great papers reduced to the mediocre, homogenized product that is the standard today. The fault, however, lies not so much with the introduction of business management — God knows we have

had enough seat-of-the-pants newsroom management — as with the conscious decision of the industry to meet the television competition head-on, adopt its mindless techniques, and appeal to the lowest common denominator — this despite the fact that experience has shown in many markets that newspapers have flourished both commercially and as a public service by doing what TV cannot do: provide a forum for in-depth discussion of issues and social trends as well as purvey information.

In city after city, large and small, I have found that those who make up the intellectual core of every community — educators, business people, civic and artistic directors, ministers and rabbis — consider the local paper irrelevant, so devoid of content that it is held in contempt. And the newsrooms are filled with reporters, and editors, in despair over what is being imposed on them.

There is another cause for the vacuum that extends even to the serious papers that have tried to avoid being an echo of television. It is a strange kind of centralization that, while intended to assure nonideological "quality control," too often robs reporters of initiative and drives the best of them from the newsrooms. The old-line, independent-minded editor described by Underwood as near extinction and often depicted as a tyrant, in fact usually drew his strength from his ability to attract the resourceful reporter who would then be given his or her head to decide, as the one closest to the story, much of the content of a beat.

For example, at a reunion of civil rights reporters at the University of Mississippi a year ago by far the best talk, I thought, was given by John Popham, who covered the South for the *Times* in the early stages of the civil rights movement. Popham, long since retired, told how he tapped the thought of black intellectuals in colleges across the South, a kind of reporting that laid the groundwork for national leaders to eventually support the black uprising. It is doubtful that any editor in New York, or southern whites in general, even knew of the existence of such an intellectual network. Only a reporter with Popham's mandate and freedom could have discovered and exploited it. Yet it is certain that today a Popham would find working conditions at the *Times*, or at almost any other major paper, intolerable: too many demands from too many editors. A universal complaint of reporters is that not only the assignment but the content as well is dictated by the editors, who in their reporting days would never have accepted such control. It is not unusual these days for an editor to assign stories without ever consulting the re-

porter on the beat about the best approach.

No wonder we are so often caught by surprise when events turn out different from the preconceived notions of editors who, no matter how capable, cannot possibly know all things. No wonder we are sliding into a void where public discourse is often rendered meaningless.

JOHN HERBERS  
Bethesda, Md.

Editors' note: *John Herbers was Ferris professor of journalism at Princeton and Baltimore Sun lecturer at the University of Maryland during the 1987-88 academic year.*

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Your article "When MBAs Rule the Newsroom" was terrific, but I know from my own experience that the characterization of *Detroit News* executive editor Bob Giles as "the prototypical Gannett editor" was inadequate. Shortly after he took over the *News*, Giles made a personnel decision not based on charts, graphs, etc. that ought to make women journalists (especially those who read your article "The Baby Bind: Can Journalists Be Mothers?" in the same issue) stand up and cheer.

Although neither Gannett nor the *News* had a formal maternity-leave policy at the time, Giles instituted a policy of up to four months paid leave for the *News*. This was in marked contrast to the *News*'s previous practice, which had been arbitrary, at best. To my knowledge, he made his decision because of his personal experience in working with women journalists. He told me that he believed that four months was "about the right amount of time" a woman needed for her family.

Also, please note that I left the *News* last year.

ELIZABETH GRILLO OLSON  
Montclair, N.J.

#### TO THE REVIEW:

I read Doug Underwood's article with a sense of relief, admiration, and apprehension — relief that there are a number of newspeople who still know something about newspapering, admiration for Underwood and his research, and apprehension about the future.

MERLE F. PUGH  
Tigard, Ore.

#### DEPTH charges

#### TO THE REVIEW:

In "Bumpy Ride at U. S. News" (CJR, May/June) the *Review's* associate editor, Michael



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FORMER PRESIDENT ENTERS DINAH SHORE — Flier to duplicate Miss Earhart's fatal flight — Literacy week observed. CJR now offers two collections of hilarious flubs from the nation's press culled from 26 years of "The Lower case": *Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim*, and *Red Tape Holds Up New Bridge*. \$7.50 per book (\$15 for both) includes postage and handling. Send order clearly specifying your choice of books with payment to: Columbia Journalism Review, Attn: Books, 700A Journalism Bldg., Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Hoyt, wrote quite extensively about DEPTH News Service and its professional connections with *U.S. News & World Report*. Surely an occasion for pride for a young, independent media project, recently started up by a group of seasoned newsmen. Rarely, however, in my twenty-eight years in the trade — including twenty-two years as regular correspondent for *The Economist* and eight as chief foreign correspondent of *Foreign Report* — have I come across such a totally pointless, distorted, and unwarranted tissue of falsehood and misrepresentation.

What most shocked me was the contempt shown by the official publication of a celebrated school of journalism for two fundamental rules of ethics and indeed of justice: 1) The *Review* seriously impugned the credibility, competence, and integrity of DEPTH, on the strength of unsupported gossip and by means of reprehensible techniques like snide innuendo. 2) DEPTH was given no chance to defend itself. It was laid on your magazine's chopping block to be ripped up like an inanimate object.

Hoyt did try to claim feebly that "calls went unanswered" at the number supplied by *Foreign Report* for Mr. Shamis. Are your editors incapable of using a phone book or unable to spend a few minutes making routine inquiries to find the numbers of DEPTH News Service and Mr. Giora Shamis? Incapable or unwilling?

Quite obviously, I am most anxious for a chance to refute the allegations leveled against DEPTH in the *Review*'s article, and somehow remove some of the mud thrown unprovoked on a young professional media organization's good name. But this chance has been denied me. I think your readers deserve to be told that, on May 16, when the May/June *Review* came to my attention, I telephoned the *Review*'s editor and made two constructive suggestions for remedying some of the harm. I asked for DEPTH to be given equal time, space, and prominence in your coming issue, simply to present its case and correct the distorted view of DEPTH afforded in the original article. Alternatively, I offered full cooperation to an investigative team from the *Columbia Journalism Review* to visit DEPTH and examine its operation from the inside.

Both options were turned down by the *Review*. If these are your standards of fair play and reporting, I can only leave it to your readers to judge the values guiding your publication.

GIORA SHAMIS  
Chief editor of DEPTH  
Jerusalem, Israel

Michael Hoyt replies: *Despite many at-*

*tempts, I was unable to reach Mr. Shamis at the number provided by his long-time employer. In retrospect, I regret not trying to find other ways of reaching him. Still, I don't think there is anything that could be called "unsupported" in the article.*

The editors reply: *Mr. Shamis was told that, like everyone else who believes he or she has been unfairly represented in the Review, he could have ample space (in this particular case, up to 1,000 words) in our Unfinished Business department to make whatever points he wishes to make. The offer still stands.*

### Porn, no; puff, yes?

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Your article on newspaper bans on cigarette advertising, or the lack thereof ("Hearts, Minds, and Lungs," CJR, May/June), quoted *New York Times* advertising acceptability manager Robert P. Smith as defending cigarette ads by saying, "We make our choices as a company and the readers can make theirs."

Mr. Smith is being a bit disingenuous. A decade or so ago, the *Times* decided to ban ads for pornographic movies. The paper made a choice, but precluded readers from making a choice on whether to see such movies based on an ad in the *Times*. Regardless of what one thinks of porn, I don't think many folks would regard it as being as harmful as cigarettes. Yet it was banned from the pages of the *Times* while a product that kills hundreds of thousands of people each year could still be promoted in the paper. At the very least, there would appear to be a double standard operating here.

DAN HARRISON  
Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.

### After Hazelwood

#### TO THE REVIEW:

In her otherwise fine article, "Fallout from Hazelwood" (CJR, May/June), Laura Fraser mistakenly writes that Youth Communication in Washington, D.C., helped start a student-run newspaper in Portland, Oregon.

In fact, *Youth Today*, the newspaper Fraser refers to, was started by *The Oregonian* and the Metropolitan Youth Commission. It receives financial support from *The Oregonian* and the Portland School District, and students from around the metropolitan area work in *The Oregonian* newsroom under the tutelage of myself and Alice Simpson, youth commission executive director. After more than two years, we remain unfettered by any attempts at censorship.

## CJR Internships

Applications are now being accepted for the fall program. Interns will work closely with editors on a wide range of research, writing, and production projects.

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JUDSON RANDALL  
Assistant managing editor  
*The Oregonian*  
Portland, Ore.

### 'Secrets' of the temple

#### TO THE REVIEW:

As the reporter primarily responsible for coverage of the Federal Reserve System for *The Washington Post* since 1979, I would like to comment on Mark Hertsgaard's review of William Greider's *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*, in the March/April issue.

In the book, Greider asserts that the press failed to report adequately on Federal Reserve policy actions and their prospective economic impact during this decade. I can only conclude that Greider deliberately chose to ignore the detailed reports about the Fed carried by *The Washington Post* and some other publications in order to justify the notion that basic Fed policy intentions were "secret." Even limited research would have turned up my stories and those of other reporters.

The *Post's* coverage of the Fed has been so comprehensive that a number of government securities traders have gone to considerable trouble to arrange home delivery of the *Post* in New York City to make sure they have access on a timely basis to my stories on monetary policy.

Nevertheless, in his review Hertsgaard uncritically accepts Greider's false claims about Fed coverage and the patently nonsensical notion that "the friendliness of corporate-owned news organizations toward fellow bulwarks of the established order" affects the quality of that coverage. Neither Greider nor Hertsgaard provides any examples. Instead, they take an unjustified, unsupported slap at our integrity.

JOHN M. BERRY  
*The Washington Post*  
Washington, D.C.

### The baby bind

#### TO THE REVIEW:

My sister, a reporter on maternity leave, sent me a copy of "The Baby Bind: Can Journalists be Mothers?" (CJR, March/April), and I have read it twice — in amazement. This is the "newspaper business" — the world of *The Front Page* and H. L. Mencken, of freethinkers and boozers and iconoclasts? My dad was a newspaperman in a big city and I

grew up among tales of the nontraditional employee — and employer. But this world sounds more like, God forbid, banks used to be: rigid, paternalistic, and indifferent to women employees' needs.

Where has "the business" been for the last twenty years — when women were causing the biggest revolution in the labor force since folks left their farms for cash money in the late 1800s? Newspapers had to change their "Women's" section to a "Living" section, they had to get rid of honorifics, change their want-ad sections, and, in some cases, show little pictures of the bride- and groom-to-be. And yet it appears that all the changes in both the world and the papers that report on it have not penetrated the minds and hearts of the people in charge. It is clear now that they don't read their own stuff, for surely there has been enough written about women in the workplace, flex time, child care, etc. in the last few years to alert even the sleepiest of male managers.

Even here in the non-trendy Midwest we have state legislation requiring state agencies to develop alternative work hours so that state employees can better balance home and office. I'm a manager in that system and have found it very worthwhile to accommodate parents with young children. Worthwhile for everyone.

I wish all women reporters of child-bearing age good luck; it sounds as if they'll need it.

ELLEN O'BRIEN SAUNDERS  
Madison, Wis.

P.S. My sister reports that her paper has agreed to her return to work at reduced hours; she's very pleased.

### Addendum

A belated Laurel in the May/June issue to San Francisco television station KRON and the Center for Investigative Reporting, for 1987 reports on the Reagan administration's harassment of outspoken critics of its Central American policies, should also have cited the contribution of Neil Roland of UPI, who in a February 19, 1987, piece reported on the harassment of dozens of American citizens and groups after visits to Nicaragua.

### Deadline

The editors welcome letters from readers. To be considered for publication in the September/October issue, letters should be received by July 20. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space.

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# The Lower case

## Mass murderer wears mask of charm



Toronto Globe & Mail 2/8/88

### Death penalty to druggists in U.S. likely

WASHINGTON, April 20: President Reagan urged Congress on Tuesday to swiftly pass a law allowing the death penalty for drug-related deaths and murders.

*The Muslim* (Islamabad, Pakistan) 4/21/88

### Reward offered for biting dog

*The Knoxville Journal* 4/5/88

## Royal Bank of Scotland Considers Buying Citizens

*American Banker* 3/22/88

### Dyer deputy shoots, kills man with realistic toy gun

*The Knoxville Journal* 5/10/88

### Cindy Jo Still Wed to Niles A. Howard

*The New York Times* 4/25/88

### Federal debt up 24.6¢

*Post-Star* (Glens Falls, N.Y.) 5/21/88

### Police: Man Sought to Kill Boesky

*The Post-Standard* (Syracuse, N.Y.) 3/2/88

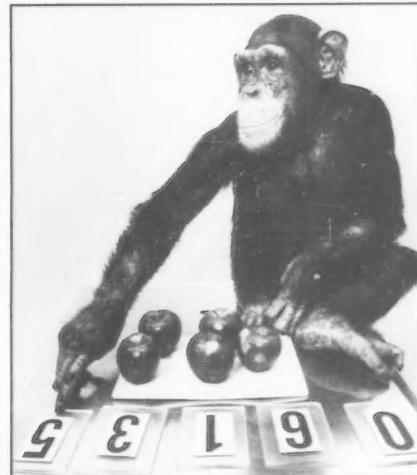
### Professor attached to chair

*UAA Voice* (Anchorage, Alaska) 4/11/88

## Robert Bork Disrobes To Take On Critics

*The Valdosta (Ga.) Daily Times* 1/15/88

CJR asks readers who contribute items to this department to send only original clippings suitable for reproduction; please include the name and date of publication, as well as your name and address.



**Monkey math:** Sheba the chimpanzee points to the number 4 after counting a like number of apples during a demonstration at Ohio State University's animal lab. Sheba is one of two chimps in the world that have demonstrated the ability to count.

*The Cincinnati Post* 4/11/88



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